

SHIRLEY BAKER AND THE KINGDOM OF TONGA

by

Noel Rutherford

A thesis presented in partial
fulfilment of the requirements of
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Australian National University

April 1966

SHIRLEY BAKER
AND THE KINGDOM OF TONGA
NOEL RUTHERFORD
APRIL 1966

853214

This thesis is based entirely on my own research whilst a Research Scholar of the Department of Pacific History in the Australian National University, except where otherwise specifically acknowledged in the preface, text or footnotes.

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

A limited number of copies of this work has been reproduced for circulation to those people who have materially assisted in its preparation. It is however, under revision for publication, and should be regarded as if in manuscript. It may not be copied, in whole or in part, without the express permission in writing of the author.

The Honourable and Reverend Shirley Waldemar Baker

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
Preface	i
Note on Tongan Spelling	ix
Chapter 1 Tonga in 1860	1
Chapter 2 'A Missionary to the Heathen of the South Sea Islands'	18
Chapter 3 The King's Adviser	40
Chapter 4 The Chairman of the Tonga District	68
Chapter 5 Koe Siasi Tau'atāina: The Independent Church	101
Chapter 6 The Making of a Modern State	126
Chapter 7 The End of a Missionary Career	165
Chapter 8 The King's First Minister	247
Chapter 9 The Mu'a Raꞑliament	287
Chapter 10 Secession and Persecution	328
Chapter 11 An Attempted Assassination	360
Chapter 12 The Denouement	395
Chapter 13 Epilogue and Conclusion	431
Bibliography	447

SHIRLEY BAKER AND THE KINGDOM OF TONGA

PREFACE

FOR the peoples of the Pacific Islands the nineteenth century was a period of bewildering and demoralising change. The islands had received occasional visits from mariners and explorers before the beginning of the century, but while these visits excited the cupidity and wonder of the islanders they had little effect on their lives. But from about 1800 expanding Western civilisation forced itself upon the island world, and successive waves of Europeans began rapidly eroding traditional societies. First came the beachcombers bringing new technologies. They were followed by whalers bringing alcohol and new diseases, by missionaries with their new beliefs, by traders introducing new patterns of economic activity and by planters insisting on new attitudes to property. Native societies underwent revolutionary changes within a short space of time in an attempt to adjust to the new demands being made upon them, but in almost every case their responses were inadequate. Unable to come to terms with the new dispensation, one by one the island polities succumbed and were absorbed into one or other of the colonial empires.

All except one. Alone among the island groups of the Pacific, Tonga emerged from the nineteenth century as a sovereign, independent state. Admittedly its sovereignty was compromised in 1901 when it became a British 'Protected State', but even then it was not a colony, nor even the usual form of protectorate. Its

SHIRLEY BAKER AND THE KINGDOM OF TONGA

PREFACE

FOR the peoples of the Pacific Islands the nineteenth century was a period of bewildering and demoralising change. The islands had received occasional visits from mariners and explorers before the beginning of the century, but while these visits excited the cupidity and wonder of the islanders they had little effect on their lives. But from about 1800 expanding Western civilisation forced itself upon the island world, and successive waves of Europeans began rapidly eroding traditional societies. First came the beachcombers bringing new technologies. They were followed by whalers bringing alcohol and new diseases, by missionaries with their new beliefs, by traders introducing new patterns of economic activity and by planters insisting on new attitudes to property. Native societies underwent revolutionary changes within a short space of time in an attempt to adjust to the new demands being made upon them, but in almost every case their responses were inadequate. Unable to come to terms with the new dispensation, one by one the island polities succumbed and were absorbed into one or other of the colonial empires.

All except one. Alone among the island groups of the Pacific, Tonga emerged from the nineteenth century as a sovereign, independent state. Admittedly its sovereignty was compromised in 1901 when it became a British 'Protected State', but even then it was not a colony, nor even the usual form of protectorate. Its

influence, which form the subject of this work.

During his lifetime Baker was a controversial figure, but since his death writers who have dealt with the history of Tonga have reached a consensus of opinion about him. Unfortunately this unanimity has been achieved by relying on the unsupported testimony of one man, Basil Thomson, whose skill as a raconteur has given his opinions an authority which they do not really deserve. Thomson was a British Government official who was lent to Tonga to fill the gap left by Baker's sudden dismissal and deportation in 1890. For about a year he occupied the position of Deputy Premier in Tonga, and after his retirement he wrote an amusing account of the modernisation of Tonga in his book The Diversions of a Prime Minister.¹ This work was later supplemented by another, Savage Island,² and a third, The Scene Changes,³ as well as several articles in Blackwoods Magazine.⁴ In all of these works Thomson portrayed Baker as the ignorant, venal, tyrannical and hypocritical parson who manipulated Tongan politics for his own aggrandisement. Thomson, however, was a biased witness. In the first place, he was opposed in Tonga by Baker's supporters, while his

1 Basil Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister (Edinburgh, 1894).

2 Basil Thomson, Savage Island: an account of a Sojourn in Niue and Tonga (London, 1902).

3 Sir Basil Thomson, The Scene Changes (New York, 1937).

4 E.g. 'The Samoa Agreement in Plain English', Blackwoods Magazine, vol.166, December 1899; 'A Statesman-Adventurer of the Pacific', Blackwoods Magazine, vol.175, February 1904.

allies and associates were Baker's political enemies. This alone would tend to distort his view. Secondly, one of Thomson's primary (though repudiated) functions in Tonga was to pave the way for increasing British influence there, and he could not be expected to give praise to one whose political life had been devoted to keeping British influence out. It was Thomson, incidentally, who eventually extracted a Treaty of Protection from a very reluctant Tongan King and Parliament. Thirdly, Thomson was building himself a career, and enhanced his own reputation as a legislator and administrator by the time-honoured method of belittling the achievements of his predecessor. And fourthly, Thomson was a gentleman, the son of a bishop, with little sympathy for upstarts like Baker who rose to office without the necessary qualification of an old school tie.

For these reasons Thomson's opinions are liable to be untrustworthy, yet his account has been accepted without question by most writers. Wright and Fry used Baker as a dramatic example to support the general theory that the influence of missionaries in the Pacific was pernicious, which they formulated in their book Puritans in the South Seas.⁵ Their material on Baker was taken verbatim from Thomson's The Diversions of a Prime Minister. Koskinen, in his work Missionary Influence as a Political Factor in the Pacific Islands,⁶

5 Louis B. Wright and Mary Isabel Fry, Puritans in the South Seas (New York, 1936), pp.262-8.

6 Aarne A. Koskinen, Missionary Influence as a Political Factor in the Pacific Islands (Helsinki, 1953), p.78.

characterised Baker as a 'petty tyrant', citing Thomson as his authority. Martin, in his work Missionaries and Annexation in the Pacific, wrote of Baker: 'His career does not imply an unlimited condemnation of mission work, but it does suggest that power without real responsibility is inevitably bad'.⁷ Again the source is Thomson. A similar appraisal based on the same evidence was made by Oliver in his general history, The Pacific Islands.⁸ The only attempt to form an independent judgment based on primary sources has been Morrell's Britain in the Pacific Islands,⁹ but even this account relied heavily on British documents from the Foreign Office and Colonial Office archives, which served only to reinforce the traditional account as formulated by Thomson. The Australian Methodist Church had in its archives material to challenge this view, but the issues involved were so controversial that it preferred to let sleeping dogs lie. In its official mission history, A Century in the Pacific, the opportunity was passed over with the simple admission: 'We would fain draw a veil over the history of this regrettable period'.¹⁰

There has been one attempt to present an entirely different view of Baker. This was the Memoirs

7 K.L.P. Martin, Missionaries and Annexation in the Pacific (O.U.P., 1924), p.99.

8 Douglas L. Oliver, The Pacific Islands, Revised Edn., (Harvard, 1961) p.184.

9 W.P. Morrell, Britain in the Pacific Islands (O.U.P., 1960).

10 James Colwell (Ed.), A Century in the Pacific (Sydney, n.d.), p.431.

of the Reverend Dr Shirley Waldemar Baker, a collection of extracts from Baker's letters and journals, compiled by his daughters Lillian and Beatrice.¹¹ This little work, however, had few literary pretensions, and was so unashamedly a hagiography that it has generally been ignored. Morrell used it, but specifically warned his readers that it was 'a naive work which must be used with caution'.¹² No one, on the other hand, has suggested that Thomson's account needed to be approached with equal caution.

It therefore seemed important to re-examine the career of Shirley Baker, to recount the events which occurred in Tonga between 1860 and 1890, and to re-evaluate Baker's contribution to developments in Tonga during that period. There existed sufficient primary source material to attempt this without relying either on the Misses Baker or Basil Thomson except to corroborate other testimony. The resulting study is essentially a biography, but it is hoped that it may also make some small contribution to the understanding of the problems which faced Tonga in the late nineteenth century, and beyond that of the more general problem of acculturation in other societies.

There remains the pleasant task of thanking those who have assisted in the preparation of this work. To my supervisor, Mr H.E. Maude, and to Professor J.W.

11 Lillian and Beatrice Shirley Baker, Memoirs of the Reverend Dr. Shirley Waldemar Baker, D.M. Ll.D., Missionary and Prime Minister (London, n.d.).

12 Morrell, Britain in the Pacific Islands, p.317.

Davidson of the Department of Pacific History at the Australian National University, I owe a heavy debt of gratitude for their patient encouragement, guidance and criticism. I must also express my gratitude to my colleagues of the Department of Pacific History, A.N.U., particularly to the Rev. S. Lātukefu, Dr Dorothy Shineberg, Dr D. Scarr, Dr W.N. Gunson and Dr P. van der Veur; to Professor G.A. Cranfield of the University of Newcastle; and to Professor G. Sawyer of the Department of Law, A.N.U.; all of whom either read and criticised the drafts, or offered advice in their specialist fields.

I am also deeply grateful to His Majesty, King Tāufa'āhau Tupou IV of Tonga, for making it possible for me to carry out research in Tonga. Among the many people who gave assistance in Tonga I must give special mention to the 'Eiki Ve'ehala, Mr M. Challons, the Rev. G. Harris, Tupou Posesi Fanua, Tongilava, Feiloakitau Kaho, and Siola'a Soakai. Research was also carried out in various libraries and archives and I must express my appreciation of the help and advice offered by the librarians and staffs of the Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva, the Mitchell Library, Sydney, the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, the New Zealand Archives, Wellington, the Public Library, Auckland, the Hocken Library, Dunedin, the Dixon Library, Sydney, the Latrobe Library, Melbourne, the Australian National Library, Canberra, and the Library of the Australian National University, Canberra. My gratitude is also due to many who have made available private papers: particularly to the

Australian Methodist Overseas Mission, to the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga and to the Bishop in Polynesia, for permission to work in their respective archives; to Mr Justice Hammet of Fiji for access to his collection of Koe Boobooi; to Professor J.W. Davidson, the Rev. S. Lātukefu, Dr A.M. Maude, Mr J. Poulsen, Dr D. Scarr, Mr N. Fitzgerald and Dr W.N. Gunson for permission to quote from their manuscripts; and to Mr H.E. Maude for the loan of many otherwise unprocurable books and documents from his private collection.

I am indebted to the 'Eiki Ve'ehala, the Rev. G. Harris, the Rev. S. Lātukefu, Tupou Posesi Fanua, Tangata'olakepa Niumeitōlu and Mr N. Streatham for assistance in translating Tongan materials, and to Mr W. Bryant for the translation of works in French. Finally I must thank Mrs A. Lamberts, Miss E. Vincent and Miss B. Gawronski, who typed the drafts, Mrs C. Daniell who drew the maps, and my wife, who prepared the bibliography.

Noel Rutherford
1 April 1966

NOTE ON THE SPELLING OF TONGAN AND FIJIAN WORDS

The missionaries who first committed the Pacific Islands languages to writing found it necessary to modify the alphabet to accommodate unfamiliar sounds. In Fijian, for instance, the consonants 'g' and 'b' did not occur, except in the combinations of 'ng', 'ngg', and 'mb'; the missionaries therefore adopted the convention of using a 'g' to represent an 'ng', a 'b' to represent an 'mb', and for the 'ngg' used the letter 'q'; similarly a vowel 'th', as in the English word 'with' was written with a 'c' in the Fijian script. These conventions have been retained in Fiji, and hence Fijian words appearing in this work are written in this manner. Thus the king whose name is written as 'Cakobau' is pronounced as if it were spelt 'Thakombau'.

In Tonga the modifications were less far-reaching but have nevertheless caused much confusion. For instance the letter 'b' was used by the missionaries to represent a sound in Tongan which is mid-way between the English 'p' and 'b', the letter 'g' was used for the Tongan nasal 'ng' sound, and the letter 'j' used for a dental plosive sound which combines the elements of an English 't' and 's'.

However in March 1943, by decree of the Tongan Government, the use of the missionary orthography was abandoned and the spelling of

Tongan words was standardised. The letter 'p' replaced the missionary 'b', 's' replaced the missionary 'j', 'ng' replaced the missionary 'g' and the use of accents was introduced to mark emphasised vowels and glottal closures. Thus 'Togatabu' became Tongatapu, 'Jioaji Tubou' became 'Sioasi Tupou', and Haano became Ha'āno.

In this work the modern spelling is used throughout the text, but in direct quotation from old books and manuscripts the old spelling will still be found. Where this seemed likely to cause confusion, particularly as to the identity of a person referred to in a quotation, the orthodox spelling has been included in parenthesis.

CHAPTER I

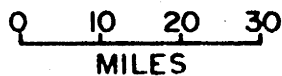
TONGA IN 1860

The Land and the People

THE archipelago which Cook called the Friendly Islands, and which is now known as the Kingdom of Tonga, lies east of Fiji and south of Samoa in the south-western quadrant of the Pacific Ocean. It is made up of rather more than 150 islands, which may be divided into three groups: to the south is Tonga, or more properly Tongatapu (Sacred Tonga), the largest island and the political centre of the whole group, with its smaller adjacent islands of which the most important is 'Eua. About 200 miles north of Tongatapu is another large island, Vava'u, which also has numerous smaller islands clustered around it. Approximately mid-way between Tongatapu and Vava'u lies the third group, a skein of low lying islands collectively known as Ha'apai. There are also several outlying islands: a parallel chain of high volcanic islands, mostly barren and inhospitable, to the west of the main axis of the archipelago, and including the large island of Tofua; the islands of Niuafu'ou and Niuatoputapu, some 200 miles north of Vava'u; and the isolated island of 'Ata, about a hundred miles south of Tonga. The main islands have soils composed of volcanic ash and eroded limestone, and are extremely fertile. The climate is magnificent: always warm but seldom hot or humid.

The people of Tonga are Polynesian, belonging to the same ethnic group as the Hawaiians, Maoris,

TONGA



175°W

Vava'u I.

Neiafu

Ovaka I.

Late I. ○

VAVA'U GROUP

19°

HA'APAI GROUP

Tofua I.

Ha'ano I.

Foa I.

Pangai

Lifuka I.

Lofanga I.

Ha'afeva I.

'Uiha I.

20°

Nomuka I.

TONGATAPU GROUP

Tongatapu I.

Malinoa I.

Hihifo

Nuku'alofa

Pea

Hahake

Mu'a

'Eua I.

175°W

Niuafo'ou I.

16°S

Niuaatoputapu I.

21°

0 50 M

174°W

Tahitians and Samoans. Both in language and in physical characteristics they closely resemble the Samoans, although long-standing connections with Fiji have introduced some variations in type. Where the Tongans came from remains a matter of conjecture, but it is now known, from radio-carbon dating of samples of charcoal taken from a midden at Tufumāhina near Pea, Tongatapu, that the area has been inhabited at least since the fifth century B.C.

The population of the group has never been very large. A missionary estimate made in 1840 put the figure for the whole archipelago at 18,500; by 1860 it was probably somewhat less than 20,000.¹

Kinship Ties and Social Organisation

BEFORE the period of European contact all political and economic activity in Tonga was governed by the principles of a complex social system based on rank and kinship, and this system was still the basis of Tongan society in 1860, and, in a modified form, remains so

1 For further information of the geography of Tonga see: Pacific Islands, III, British Naval Intelligence Division, B.R. 519B (1944); A.H. Wood, A History and Geography of Tonga (Nuku'alofa, 1932); A.M. Maude, Population, Land and Livelihood in Tonga (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, A.N.U., 1965). On the ethnic characteristics of Tongans see: E.W. Gifford, Tongan Society, Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin, no.61 (Honolulu, 1929). For a detailed description of the archaeological evidence from Tufumāhina and other sites see: J. Poulsen, A Contribution to the Prehistory of Tonga (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, A.N.U. - to be submitted in 1966). The missionary estimate of population is quoted by Gifford, Tongan Society, p.6.

today. The system rested on three tenets: the husband was superior to the wife; the sister was superior to the brother; the elder was superior to the younger. The way in which these principles operated may be seen in the basic unit of Tongan society, the household or 'api.²

The head of the 'api was the 'ulu,³ the husband and the father of the other members of the household. The 'ulu was treated with great respect by the family, a respect which was also extended to his brothers, especially his elder brothers. Even greater respect was shown to the 'ulu's sisters, who were superior in rank to the 'ulu, and whose children were fahu to the 'ulu and his children: a fahu enjoyed special superiority over his kinsfolk and could demand or authoritatively beg the property, possessions and personal services of persons to whom he was fahu. The children of the 'ulu were, of course, in the same fahu relationship to their mother's brother and his children. The 'ulu and his sons worked a piece of land, also called an 'api, on which they grew bananas, yams, kumala (sweet potatoes), talo (taro), sugar cane and coconut palms, and reared their pigs and fowls. The 'ulu's wife and daughters performed the lighter household chores including the manufacture of the bark cloth known as tapa, and the weaving of pandanus mats.

Individual households belonged to an extended

2 Singular: 'api; plural: ngaahi 'api.

3 Singular: 'ulu; plural: ngaahi 'ulu.

family group, cognate with the Fijian mataqali, and which the Rev. S. Lātukefu has described by the Tongan term, fa'ahinga.⁴ At the head of each fa'ahinga was the 'ulumotu'a,⁵ with authority over his kinsmen, the dependent ngaahi 'ulu. Kau'ulumotu'a were normally in their own right foto tehina⁶ (minor chiefs) or kau matāpule⁷ (ceremonial attendants and spokesmen of chiefs). Just as the 'ulumotu'a was superior to his whole fa'ahinga, so his sister and his sister's children were fahu to the whole fa'ahinga.

Groups of ngaahi fa'ahinga were connected by ancestral kinship ties to a larger group or tribe, called by Lātukefu the kāinga, at the head of which was the chief, or 'eiki.⁸ Chiefs were the effective political leaders in Tonga and ruled their ngaahi kāinga as more or less autonomous units, rather in the manner of Scottish lairds. Each kāinga occupied a specific area of land and was centred on a village. The chief distributed land among his kau 'ulumotu'a, who in turn subdivided it among the ngaahi 'ulu of their fa'ahinga; the chiefs' authority, derived from kinship ties, was therefore reinforced by his power to give or withhold land.

Connected ngaahi kāinga, that is ngaahi kāinga

4 Singular: fa'ahinga; plural: ngaahi fa'ahinga.

5 Singular: 'ulumotu'a; plural kau 'ulumotu'a.

6 Singular: tehina; plural: foto tehina.

7 Singular: matāpule; plural: kau matāpule.

8 Singular: 'eiki; plural: hou 'eiki.

founded by the sons or brothers of a remote common ancestor, made up a lineage, called by Lātukefu a ha'a. A chief who ruled a ha'a was a very powerful chief indeed and could count on the support of all the chiefs of his lineage. The most powerful lineages in 1860 were the Ha'a Tu'i Kanokupolu, the Ha'a Takalaua, the Ha'a Havea, the Ha'a Ngata Tupu, the Ha'a Ngata Motu'a and the Ha'a Fale Fisi. At the head of the most important lineage of all, the Sina'e Tu'i Tonga, from which all other lineages derived, stood the Tu'i Tonga, the paramount chief of the whole archipelago and the titular owner of the soil, to whom was presented every year a ritual offering of first fruits. According to Tongan legend the first Tu'i Tonga was fathered by the sky God, Tangaloa 'Eitumatupu'a. The sister of the Tu'i Tonga was, however, his superior in rank and was known as the Tu'i Tonga Fefine. She was of such unique rank that she was not permitted to marry, though she was at liberty to accept lovers. The eldest daughter of such a liaison possessed the most exalted rank of all: she was the Tamahā, the great fahu to all Tonga.

Thus the social organisation of Tonga was permeated by a complex system of rank and authority based on kinship, and though it is possible to distinguish separate classes of chiefs, minor chiefs, matāpule, commoners and slaves (the latter being prisoners-of-war), there were in reality an infinite number of gradations in rank between the Tamahā, who was almost divine, and the childless, wifeless, maternal uncle of the children of a slave, who theoretically

occupied the lowest rung on the social ladder.⁹

The Development of the Royal Titles

ALTHOUGH in theory the Tu'i Tonga could hold his people in thrall by the authority of his position in the kinship system, in practice ambitious chiefs frequently attempted to usurp his office. It was after the assassination of the Tu'i Tonga Takalaua, not the first to die so untimely, that his successor decided to delegate temporal authority, with its attendant risks, to a younger brother, who became the first Tu'i Ha'atakalaua. After this event, which probably occurred in the fifteenth century, there were two royal chiefs in Tonga: the Tu'i Tonga retaining the ritual and sacramental functions of kingship, and the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua exercising the executive power. In the early seventeenth century a further subdivision of authority occurred when the sixth Tu'i Ha'atakalaua, in order to be relieved of the onerous duty of maintaining order among the factious chiefs of Hihifo, the western district of Tonga, installed his son, Ngata, as the first of a new line of temporal kings, the Tu'i Kanokupolu. This third title was inferior in rank to

9 For more detailed information on the Tongan social system see: Sione Lātukefu, Church and State Relationships in Tonga 1827-1875 (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, A.N.U. - to be submitted in 1966); Gifford Tongan Society; Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole, Pangai Village in Tonga, Polynesian Society Memoirs, XVII (Wellington, 1941); Gerd Koch, Die frühen Europäischen Einflüsse auf die Kultur der Bewohner der Tonga-Inseln (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, George-August-Universität, Göttingen, 1949).

either of the other royal titles, but owing to a succession of vigorous chiefs in the office, it gained considerable prestige at the expense of the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua title; during the eighteenth century temporal authority devolved more and more on the Tu'i Kanokupolu and the office of the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua waned in importance.¹⁰

The Period of Upheaval

THE fortunes of the three royal titles were thrown into the melting pot in 1799 when Tonga became embroiled in a civil war. The occasion of the outbreak of hostilities was the murder of the reigning Tu'i Kanokupolu, Tuku'aho, by Tupouniua, a chief of the Ha'a Ngata Tupu lineage. The chiefs of Hihifo organised an army to avenge their lord and were opposed and defeated by the army of Fīnau 'Ulukālala II (the leading chief of the Ha'a Ngata Tupu and half-brother of Tupouniua), and his ally, the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua. Following this battle, in which the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua was killed, there ensued a period of upheaval and internecine savagery that was to last for nearly half a century as rival chiefs and rival lineages struggled to gain the supremacy. Villages were converted into fortresses, cultivation declined, and famine added to

10 For further details on the development of the royal titles see: Gifford, Tongan Society; Wood, A History and Geography of Tonga; Monseigneur Bishop Blanc, A History of Tonga or Friendly Islands (California, n.d.); Robert W. Williamson, The Social and Political Systems of Central Polynesia, vols. I and II (C.U.P., 1924).

the horrors of slaughter and rapine. To increase the devastation firearms and cannon were obtained from the ships which had begun to visit Tonga frequently since the founding of a colony in New South Wales in 1788, and the techniques of modern warfare were learned from beachcombers and runaway sailors. For instance William Mariner, who was spared when his ship Port au Prince was cut off by 'Ulukālala at Lifuka in 1806, and who survived to record the events of this period, was used by his captors as a gunnery instructor.

During the civil war the three royal titles were almost entirely superseded. The Tu'i Tonga title lay in abeyance from 1810 to 1827 and after the death of the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua in 1799 that title lapsed entirely. The Tu'i Kanokupolu title passed through many vicissitudes. After the murder of Tuku'aho and the defeat of his avengers, 'Ulukālala appointed two pigs to the office; the Hihifo chiefs butchered the pigs and the Ha'a Havea chiefs elevated Ma'afulimuloa to the office though he possessed no legitimate claim to it, and was merely the puppet of his own lineage. Ma'afulimuloa was assassinated in 1800 and the office remained vacant until 1812 when it was conferred on Tupouto'a, the son of the murdered Tuku'aho. But despite his legitimacy Tupouto'a could not exercise authority, and after his death in 1820 the office lapsed again until 1827. During this period the only effective authority was exercised by powerful chiefs with no claim to royal prerogatives. For a time 'Ulukālala held sway over the whole archipelago, but

after his death in 1809 Tonga disintegrated into three separate principalities with the 'Ulukālala family ruling Vava'ū, Tupouto'a ruling Ha'apai, and the Ha'a Havea chiefs attaining some sort of hegemony over the warring factions in Tongatapu. The resuscitation of the office of Tu'i Kanokupolu and the reunification of Tonga was the work of Tāufa'āhau, the son of Tupouto'a and the grandson of Tuku'aho.¹¹

The Rise of Tāufa'āhau

TĀUFA'ĀHAU became Tu'i Ha'apai on the death of his father in 1820, but for several years his authority in Ha'apai was contested by Laufilitonga, the heir to the lapsed Tu'i Tonga title, who had established the fort of Velata on Lifuka adjacent to Tāufa'āhau's fort of Pangai. It was probably not until 1830 that Tāufa'āhau drove Laufilitonga from Ha'apai and dismantled the fortifications of Velata, and by this time he had established his reputation as a redoubtable warrior. He had also emerged as the champion of a new faith, for in the interim he had been converted to Christianity.

11 Primary sources on this period include: G. Vason, An Authentic Narrative of Four Years at Tongataboo, one of the Friendly Islands in the South Sea, ed. S. Piggot (London, 1810); William Mariner, An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands with a Grammar and Vocabulary of their Language, compiled from the Communications of W. Mariner by John Martin, 2 vols. (London, 1817). The best secondary sources are: Gifford, Tongan Society; Wood, A History and Geography of Tonga; Blanc, A History of Tonga or Friendly Islands.

Tāufa'āhau's interest in Christianity began when he visited Tongatapu in 1827 for the induction of his uncle, Aleamotu'a, into the office of Tu'i Kanokupolu. Aleamotu'a was the chief of Nuku'alofa in Tongatapu, and was gradually being brought under the influence of the Christian missionaries who were sheltering in his village; his election to the royal title appears to have been an effort on the part of the other chiefs to bind him to heathenism.

An attempt had been made thirty years earlier by the London Missionary Society to convert the Tongans. A group of nine artisans had been landed in Tonga by the mission ship Duff in April 1797 to teach the gospel. These however became caught up in the violence and civil war which followed the murder of Tuku'aho and, in May 1799, three were murdered at Ha'ateiho. One of the group, Vason, abandoned the mission and adopted heathenism, living as a renegade among the Tongans for several years. The remaining five made their escape in 1800 on a ship which called fortuitously at Tonga and took them off. They made very little, if any, impact on heathenism.

A more successful attempt was made by the Wesleyan Missionary Society when ~~the Rev. Walter Lawry~~ arrived at Mu'a in August 1822. He was received kindly by Fatu, the heir to the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua title, but was obliged to leave owing to the ill health of his wife some fourteen months later. However a young chief, Futukava, after a trip to Sydney on a whaling vessel, fired the imagination of his people with stories of

the wonders he had seen, and the first glimmerings of interest in the God of Papālangi (White Man's Land) began to be shown by the Tongans.

Three years later two Tahitians, who were on their way to Fiji as L.M.S. missionaries, called at Nuku'alofa and, when Aleamotu'a welcomed them, they decided to stay. They built a church at Nuku'alofa and held services. By December 1829, when Aleamotu'a was inducted into the office of Tu'i Kanokupolu, he had become deeply interested in the new religion, though he was not yet prepared to accept it openly. Ata, a powerful chief of Hihifo, had come into contact with the new faith through two Wesleyan missionaries, the Rev. John Thomas and the Rev. John Hutchinson, who had landed at Hihifo in June 1826 and been given land by him at Ha'atafu.

At the kava parties associated with the induction ceremonies for the Tu'i Kanokupolu there is no doubt that much discussion of the new religion took place. Ata, a conservative who probably feared the revolution that the new faith would cause, had refused to allow the missionaries to teach, though he had treated them kindly enough otherwise. Tāufa'āhau, however, became deeply interested, and on his return to Ha'apai he began to behave strangely. He refused to do any work on Sundays and took instruction from a runaway sailor, who taught him simple prayers, and traced letters for him in the sand.

Early in 1828 Thomas received reinforcements with the arrival of the Rev. Nathaniel Turner and the

Rev. William Cross, who took over the Nuku'alofa congregation from the Tahitian teachers. Thereupon Aleamotu'a began attending the Wesleyan services. Tāufa'āhau had meanwhile come down from Ha'apai in search of a missionary to teach him, but when he was only offered a Tongan convert, Peter Vi, he refused the substitute and set off for Ha'apai in a fit of pique. However a little contemplation, or perhaps a violent storm, convinced him that he had to humble himself, so he turned back to Tonga and accepted Peter Vi as his teacher. Together they returned to Ha'apai. Tāufa'āhau tested the efficacy of the old gods by clubbing to death a priestess of the god Haehaetahi, and when this brought no divine retribution, he began to destroy the god-houses in his domain. In January 1830, when Thomas, who had despaired of ever converting Ata, arrived in Ha'apai, most of the Ha'apaians, in obedience to their chief, had become nominal Christians. Soon after his arrival Thomas baptised Tāufa'āhau, who took as his Christian name Siaosi (George).

After his conversion Tāufa'āhau continued to extend his influence, and with it his lotu or Christian faith. In 1831 he visited Vava'u with a fleet of fourteen war canoes and, by a combination of theological argument and armed threat converted 'Ulukālala IV to Christianity. When a half-brother of 'Ulukālala led the heathen chiefs of Vava'u in rebellion against him, Tāufa'āhau came to 'Ulukālala's aid, put down the revolt and banished the rebellious chiefs. The chiefs raised in their stead were quick to accept

Tāufa'āhau's new religion, and the population at large followed their example. Thus when 'Ulukālala IV died in 1833, with his heir, Metekitonga, still a minor, Tāufa'āhau was elected by the chiefs of Vava'u as his successor, and Ha'apai and Vava'u became a united Christian principality.

With his position secured in the north, Tāufa'āhau turned his attention to Tongatapu where his uncle, since his baptism known as Siosaia (Josiah) Tupou, was Tu'i Kanokupolu. Only in Nuku'alofa, however, was the authority of Siosaia's title respected; the heathen chiefs, who controlled the remainder of the island regarded him as a renegade and treated him with hostility and contempt. In 1835 Siosaia learned from Tu'i Vakanō, the chief of Nukunuku and a recent Christian convert, that the heathen chiefs were plotting to depose him. He asked his nephew for assistance and Tāufa'āhau raised an army in the north, sailed to Tongatapu, and in a series of engagements in 1837 overwhelmed the heathen chiefs. A further revolt broke out against the Tu'i Kanokupolu in 1840, and again it was Tāufa'āhau and his army that quelled it. Siosaia Tupou died in 1845, by which time Tāufa'āhau was recognised as the most powerful chief in the group; by the nomination of the dying Siosaia, and the choice of the Kau Mātu'a, an electoral college of chiefs, Tāufa'āhau was chosen to succeed and was inducted as Tu'i Kanokupolu on 4 December 1845. The separate principalities of Vava'u, Ha'apai and Tonga were thus reunited as one Kingdom and at the prompting of his missionary advisors, Tāufa'āhau

adopted the European title of King, along with Siosaia's family name, Tupou. Thereafter Tāufa'āhau was known as King Siaosi Tupou.¹²

Consolidation of the Kingdom

BETWEEN 1845 and 1860 Tupou directed his attention to consolidating and augmenting his authority and reducing the independence of his chiefs. One of the most effective instruments in implementing this policy was a written code of laws, which was prepared with the help of the missionaries and promulgated in 1850. Tupou had already devised a more rudimentary code in 1839, when he was ruler of Vava'u and Ha'apai, but that had only applied to the northern groups. The whole Kingdom was made amenable to the new code, and the code itself was rather more ambitious than its prototype. Like the Vava'u laws, the code of 1850 consisted, in the main, of a

12 This period has been considered in detail in the following: Latukefu, Church and State Relationships in Tonga; G.E. Hammer, The Early Years of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission in Tonga (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Otago, 1951); 'Abide' [K.M. Bates], The Foundations of Modern Tonga (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of New Zealand, Auckland, 1933). Other important sources are: Rev. Walter Lawry, Friendly and Feejee Islands: A Missionary Visit to various Stations in the South Seas in the Year MDCCCLVIII, 2nd edn. (London, 1850); Sarah S. Farmer, Tonga and the Friendly Islands, with a Sketch of their Mission History, written for young People (London, 1855); Rev. Thomas West, Ten Years in South Central Polynesia, being Reminiscences of a personal Mission to the Friendly Islands and their Dependencies (London, 1865); Gifford, Tongan Society; Blanc, A History of Tonga and Friendly Islands; Wood, A History and Geography of Tonga.

list of prohibitions against murder, theft, fornication and the like, but unlike the earlier one it also contained provisions aimed at reinforcing the King's authority: the King was declared to be 'the root of all authority', and only he could appoint governors and judges and command the assembling of chiefs; the chiefs were made dependent on the King, and only those appointed by him could hold office. Lawfully appointed chiefs, however, still retained almost unlimited power over their own people, and could demand services and labour from them 'even to the extent they [the chiefs] may think proper'.

With the same aim of consolidating his position Tupou progressively eliminated a number of potential rivals. The first of these was Matekitonga, the son of 'Ulukālala IV, who had come of age and was seeking his inheritance. In 1847 a rebellion broke out in Vava'u in his support; it was quickly quelled by Tupou and Matekitonga was sent to live in Tongatapu. Another possible focus of disaffection was Ma'afu'otu'itonga, the son of the late Siosaia; Tupou sent him to Fiji in 1848 to govern the Tongan colony in the Lau Islands. More dangerous opponents were the heir to the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua title, Tungī, and the Tu'i Tonga, Laufilitonga. Tupou suppressed the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua title and conferred on the heir a new title, also termed Tungī, which carried no royal implications; after much hesitation Tungī threw in his lot with Tupou and in 1850 became a Wesleyan. The Tu'i Tonga was more refractory and in 1848 became a convert to Roman Catholicism, a faith which the Marists had brought to Tonga in 1842.

He was supported by the people of Pea and Houma, strongholds of Catholicism, and in 1852 these towns broke out in revolt. Tupou raised an army of six thousand men and besieged the fortresses until starvation forced the defenders to sue for peace. Their surrender marked the end of overt resistance to Tupou. The King dared not violate the traditional sanctity of the Tu'i Tonga's person, and even continued to pay him ceremonial homage, but he was a harmless anachronism. When Laufilitonga died in 1865, Tupou suppressed the title, took for himself the honours and privileges pertaining to the office, and compensated the heir with the new title of Kalaniuvalu.

The Wesleyan mission, which had supported Tupou through his long struggle, shared the spoils of his victory; chiefs, anxious to demonstrate their loyalty, flocked to join the King's religion and brought their people with them. By 1853, when the Rev. Robert Young visited Tonga to negotiate the transfer of responsibility for Wesleyan missions in the Pacific from the Wesleyan Missionary Society in Britain to the Australasian Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society, under the supervision of the New South Wales and Queensland Conference of the Australasian Wesleyan-Methodist Church, he found that nearly everyone in Tonga was a Christian and that the great majority of them were Wesleyans.¹³

13 For further details see: Lātukefu, Church and State Relationships in Tonga; Bates, The Foundations of Modern Tonga; Gifford, Tongan Society; West, Ten

Tonga in 1860

IN 1860 Tonga was a land recovering from the effects of a long civil war and only recently unified by force of arms. It was a Christian land, but in many cases conversion was only nominal and assumed for political reasons. It was a land in awe of Tupou, but in which rival chiefs and lineages nursed old grievances and were only restrained by the power of the King. Perhaps most significantly it was a land at peace, for the first time in half a century, and thus open to European planting and trading interests and the involvement with foreign nations which such interests brought. Tupou looked among his missionary friends for someone sufficiently astute and well-wishing to advise him how to confirm Tonga's unity, maintain its sovereignty, reconstruct its economy and strengthen its Christianity. At this critical point Shirley Baker landed at Nuku'alofa.

footnote 13 (continued)

Years in South Central Polynesia; Rev. Robert Young, The Southern World, Journal of a Deputation from the Wesleyan Conference to New Zealand and Polynesia, 4th edn. (London, 1858); B.A. Monfat, Les Tonga ou Archipel des Amis et le R.P. Joseph Chevron (Lyons, 1893); P.S. Malia [Blanc], Chez les Méridionaux du Pacifique (Lyons, 1910).

CHAPTER 2

'A MISSIONARY TO THE HEATHEN OF THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDS'

SHIRLEY Waldemar Baker's own account of his origins is set out in the memoirs published by two of his daughters. According to this work he was born in London in 1836, the son of the Rev. George Baker, a Church of England clergyman, who 'in conjunction with his ministerial duties was Headmaster of the Oxford Home Grammar School'. His mother had been, before her marriage, Jane Gray Woolmer, daughter of a Methodist minister (the Rev. Samuel Woolmer of Gloucestershire), and sister of Dr Woolmer of London, 'medical attendant to the Queen's Household at Buckingham Palace'. With this clerical background young Baker was intended for the church, but being himself attracted towards law, began legal studies 'under one who afterwards proved himself to be amongst the first of the profession'. Not knowing where his true vocation lay, Shirley decided to postpone making a decision, and to think about it while on a trip to Australia to visit his Uncle Parker, Crown Protector to Aborigines. Thus in 1852 he arrived in the Colony of Victoria, a young gentleman of good family, with a good education and every prospect of a genteel and useful life before him.¹

This is the authorised version of Baker's background, but there have been dissenting voices. Baker's obituary in The Times in December 1903, which was

1 Baker, Memoirs, pp.5, 12.

probably written by Basil Thomson, dismissed Baker's story with the comment: 'of his early career nothing is known but what he chose to tell; and he would have found it difficult to remember which of the many variants of his own story was true'.² That comment is misleading for Baker had sketched in the outlines of his story at least as early as 1861, when the Rev. James Calvert noted the details in his diary,³ and he kept to the same story throughout his life. Nevertheless, there are good grounds for doubting its veracity, and for suspecting that his origins were more humble than he claimed.

In the first place Baker neither wrote nor spoke like the son of a Church of England cleric, possessing the advantages of a gentle upbringing and a good education. His letters were full of errors in spelling, syntax and grammar and even his carefully composed laws and edicts were written in what Thomson described as 'English that would have disgraced a housemaid'.⁴ Several people who met him noted his educational deficiencies: Sir Arthur Gordon, who met him in 1880 described him as 'a narrow minded selfish and ignorant man';⁵ even J.B. Thurston, a 'self-made

2 The Times, 30 December 1903.

3 James Calvert, Journal, Personal Papers Collection, Records of the Methodist Missionary Society, London.

4 Thomson, The Scene Changes, p.143.

5 Sir A. Gordon to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 15 July 1882, British Foreign Office Records relating to the Pacific Islands, 1822-1905 [cited henceforth as F.O.58], vol.177.

man' himself and not unfriendly towards Baker, described him as 'illiterate'.⁶ Accent is perhaps a more reliable indication of social origins than the written word, and Baker's speech was even more incompatible with a polite background than his prose. Thomson described his accent as 'common',⁷ but Thomson was, as already stated, a biased witness. However, the American historian Henry Adams, who met Baker in Samoa in 1891, who had no axe to grind, and who was indeed favourably impressed by Baker, noted that he was 'doubtful on his aspirates',⁸ a speech characteristic not associated with the upper middle classes. The same characteristic was mentioned by Alfred St. Johnston, who met Baker in Auckland in the early eighties and recorded a fragment of his conversation:

...into the office bustled a fat, methodistical looking person, with a huge double chin and unctuous countenance, bearing a parcel of documents, which he had, according to his own account, been putting through a wonderful series of evolutions and had 'on'y jus' got 'em done in time'.⁹

It was the obvious discrepancies between Baker's story and the observable facts that led visitors to Tonga like

6 J.B. Thurston to Colonel Stanley, 21 January 1886, British Foreign Office Confidential Print no.5310, item no.120, enclosure 1 [cited henceforth as F.O.C.P. 5310, no.120, enc.1, and similarly for other prints in the series].

7 Thomson, The Scene Changes, p.52.

8 Worthington Chauncey Ford (ed.), Letters of Henry Adams 1858-1891, vol.II (London, 1930), p.455.

9 Alfred St Johnston, Camping Among Cannibals (London, 1883), p.2.

Consul E.L. Layard to hint,¹⁰ and J.E. Partington to declare explicitly,¹¹ that a London slum, not a London vicarage, had sheltered Baker in his early years.

In the second place, doubt is thrown upon Baker's story by the total absence of any record testifying to the existence of Baker's alleged father, the Rev. George Baker of London. An exhaustive search in the Clergy List, the Clerical Guide and Crockford's Clerical Directory for the period from 1817 to 1868 has failed to reveal any George Baker with a living in London except Robert George Baker, M.A., Vicar of Fulham and a canon of St Paul's Cathedral; had Shirley Baker possessed so eminent a parent there is little doubt that he would have made much capital out of it. The Rev. George Baker's place of work, the Oxford Home Grammar School, London, has proved equally elusive, for the Census of London 1851, Crockford's Scholastic Directory 1861 and the London Directory for the period fail to mention such a school, or any other closely resembling it. In fact the only evidence of the existence of the Rev. George Baker is a record of a contribution of one guinea made by Shirley Baker to the Australasian Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society in 1870, 'in

10 Layard to the Earl of Derby, 8 March 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.1.

11 James Edge Partington, Random Rot, A Journal of Three Years Wandering about the World (Altrincham, 1883), p.212.

memory of my father, Rev. George Baker',¹² and a record of a remittance of five pounds made by the same Society on Shirley Baker's behalf to the Rev. George Baker, and guardedly addressed care of Baker's uncle, the Rev. Theophilus Woolmer, a Methodist minister in Manchester.¹³ In view of the lack of any more definite evidence to the contrary it must be assumed that George Baker was not a Church of England cleric, and that Shirley Baker conferred honorary ordination on his father with a view to improving his own prospects and social standing in Australia; once having told this falsehood he was stuck with it, and was forced to maintain the fiction for the rest of his life.

When Baker spoke of his mother, however, he was on safer ground, and his story is largely substantiated by the archival records of Epworth House, London,¹⁴ which show that Samuel Woolmer was born at St Neots in 1772, was apprenticed on Lord Harewood's estate in Barbados in 1785, and was ordained a Methodist

12 The Report of the Australasian Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society for the Year ending April 1871, with an Account of the Contributions for the Year 1870, p.98 [cited henceforth as Report A.W.M.M.S. 1870-71, and similarly for other years].

13 The Rev. Stephen Rabone to the Rev. Geo. Baker, 31 March 1866. The Methodist Overseas Mission Collection of the Mitchell Library, Sydney [cited henceforth as M.O.M.C.], set 35.

14 Information provided by Mrs G.K. Roth from research in the Methodist Archives and Research Centre, Epworth House, London.

minister after his return to England in 1797. He married Jane Gray in 1801 and died in 1827, leaving a widow and several children. One of these children was Jane Gray Woolmer, Baker's mother; another was Theophilus Woolmer, who became a Methodist minister; and a third was Dr Joseph Benson Woolmer, whose name first appeared in the London Medical Directory in 1847.¹⁵ Shirley Baker did, therefore, have an uncle who was a doctor, although not quite so eminent a doctor as he claimed: the Lord Chamberlain's Department Records 1846-1868,¹⁶ which contain the names of all medical men employed by the Royal Household, do not mention Dr J.B. Woolmer, general practitioner of Pimlico.

The most that can be said with certainty concerning Shirley Baker's background is that his mother's family, deriving from humble beginnings, had acquired respectability and middle class status during the nineteenth century. His father's position remains a subject for conjecture, but it seems likely that Jane Gray Woolmer married 'below her station', and that Shirley Baker grew up in drab and straitened circumstances, from which he fled to Australia in 1852.

The circumstances of Baker's visit to the colonies is also a matter of controversy. According to Baker his visit was in the nature of a grand tour

15 London Medical Directory (London, 1847), p.168.

16 Public Records Office, LC 3/23, Lord Chamberlain's Department, Physicians and Surgeons List, 1846-1868.

to call on an uncle, but other sources offer a different version. The Rev. S.C. Roberts, the grandson of Joseph Ellis (a Cornish miner who befriended Baker on the Victorian goldfields), and the son of a girl whom Baker had courted unsuccessfully, reported the story of the young immigrant as he had heard it from his family:

...he found the alluring gold fever so strong that he ran away from them in the old land, hid himself as a stowaway on board a ship for Australia, and worked his passage when discovered.¹⁷

Another version of the same story appeared in an article in the Sydney Evening News in 1897, written by A.W. Mackay, the son-in-law of the Rev. J.E. Moulton, a missionary who had known Baker for thirty years:

Our first trace of this heaven-gifted and erudite compiler of educational works, laws and constitutions is as an unknown, uncultured and uncouth stowaway aboard the ship Statesman bound from London to Melbourne in the year 1852. Mr. Picton, a passenger on the same vessel, employed him on arrival as a cowboy.¹⁸

The Statesman did arrive in Melbourne from London in September 1852, but the list of crew members, among whom a stowaway would have been numbered, has not survived. However, the list of passengers disembarking at Melbourne has been preserved, and it includes a Henry George Picton, which at least partially

17 S.C. Roberts, Tamai, The Life Story of John Hartley Roberts of Tonga (Sydney, 1924), p.12.

18 The Sydney Evening News, 21 October 1897, article by A.W. Mackay.

corroborates Mackay's story.¹⁹

Little is known of Baker's activities in Victoria between 1852 and 1854. Mackay claimed that as well as being a cowherd he had spent some time as an assistant to an apothecary,²⁰ while Roberts suggested that he had tried his hand at mining for gold.²¹ But by January 1855 Baker had emerged from obscurity to find employment with the Victorian Denominational School Board as the teacher in sole charge of the ninety-one pupils at the Old Post Office Hill Wesleyan School in Castlemaine, a tent and shanty town on the goldfields.²² It seems that he also acted as druggist for the local community, for Roberts recorded:

Against the school there was a room where he practised experimental chemistry, and made a studio and laboratory for himself, dispensing medicines after school hours.²³

Roberts also claimed that it was owing to the friendship and patronage of Joseph Ellis, a class leader in the Wesleyan Church, that Baker was given employment as a teacher in the Wesleyan school, but

19 Shipping Records, Archives Division of the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

20 A.W. Mackay, Account of the Sojourn in Tonga of Shirley Waldemar Baker and the Consequences of his Tyranny (Sydney, 1897), p.iv.

21 Roberts, Tamai, p.12.

22 'Abstract of Teachers' Returns for the Year Ending 31 Dec. 1885', Victorian Denominational School Board Statistics, Archives Division of the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

23 Roberts, Tamai, p.12.

he did not mention Baker's Uncle Parker.²⁴ This was a strange omission, for Edward Stone Parker, the Protector of Aborigines at Mount Franklin, a member of the Victorian Legislative Council, and later the Inspector of Denominational Schools at Castlemaine, was a pioneer of the district and the acknowledged patron and leader of the Wesleyan community in Castlemaine,²⁵ and a relationship between Parker and Baker would have merited comment. Perhaps, however, there is a simple explanation: Methodists of the time affected kinship terms towards each other; old ministers were frequently called 'Father' (the Rev. James Calvert, for instance, was always called 'Father Calvert'); less venerable ministers called each other 'Brother' and referred to each other's wives as 'Sister'; what more natural term, then, for a leading layman and patron than 'Uncle'. If this guess is correct Baker had an 'Uncle Parker', but he shared him with every other Wesleyan in Castlemaine.

As a teacher Baker was quite highly regarded by his superiors, for his educational deficiencies were not very noticeable on the goldfields, while the 'great energy' and 'undoubted ability',²⁶ which his most bitter detractors allowed him, received favourable attention: in 1859 he was invited by the Board to

24 Ibid.

25 C. Irving Benson, A Century of Victorian Methodism (Melbourne, 1935), p.62.

26 Sir C. Mitchell to Sir H. Holland, 6 May 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.2.

take their 'Honours' examination and so qualify for a headmaster's position. However, on 5 May 1859, the Board had announced a general reduction in salary for all of its teachers,²⁷ and on 15 June 1859 Baker declined the Board's offer;²⁸ his ambitions were leading him in another direction.

Baker's family connections on his mother's side, his friendship with Ellis and his position as teacher in a Wesleyan school had all combined to lead him into communion with the Wesleyan Church, and by 1857 his name was on the Castlemaine Circuit Plan as a local preacher,²⁹ together with Frederick Langham, who became a missionary in Fiji the following year, and David Wilkinson, who later became Commissioner for Native Affairs in Fiji, both of whom were to play a significant part in his later life. Baker was thus present at a rally held in Castlemaine on 19 May 1859, just after the reduction in teachers' salaries, and just before he notified the Board that he would not seek preferment in the education system. The rally was called to hear an address by the Rev. M. Buzacott, a missionary from Rarotonga, who had with him a native Christian; his convert, pupil and disciple. According

27 The Castlemaine Advertiser, 5 May 1859.

28 Baker to R.H. Budd, 15 June 1859, Victorian Denominational School Board Records, no.59/1469, Archives Division of the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

29 The Rev. W.L. Blamires and the Rev. John B. Smith, The Early Story of the Wesleyan-Methodist Church in Victoria (Melbourne, 1886), p.176

to the local newspaper:

Mr Buzacott gave a graphic description of the state of the heathen and of the trials and toils of the various missionaries...his reminiscences... were of the most deeply interesting kind.³⁰

It was probably this meeting that led Baker to make a momentous decision: he offered himself as a missionary to the heathen.

After June 1859 Baker began to prepare himself for the missionary vocation by taking a more active part in the affairs of the Wesleyan Church, and his name began to appear in the Castlemaine Advertiser as the preacher at local chapels and the speaker at meetings of the Band of Hope and the Temperance Society.³¹ A further qualification was required: the Australasian Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society, aware of the temptations that faced its agents in the islands, insisted that they be married. Baker applied to Joseph Ellis' daughter, but was refused.³² He was more successful with Elizabeth Powell, whom Roberts described as 'a beautiful and accomplished girl from a town nearby'.³³ Miss Powell had come from a little Yorkshire town of Barnard Castle, and had known in her childhood a fellow townsman who was to become one of the best known Wesleyan missionaries in the Pacific, and was to play an important part in her own

30 The Castlemaine Advertiser, 19 May 1859.

31 E.g. 8 December 1859, 17 December 1859, 17 May 1860.

32 Roberts, Tamai, p.12.

33 Ibid., p.13.

life. This was George Brown of Samoa and New Britain fame. It was Brown who informed the British circle in Tonga a few years later that Elizabeth's parents did not live in the castle itself, as she had let it be assumed, but in the village of the same name, and that 'her father was a highly respected tradesman of the town, whose wealth was in good manners rather than in worldly possessions'.³⁴

The story of the wedding party given by the diggers for the young couple was told by Roberts, whose mother was a witness:

Every available kerosene tin, old bucket or discarded gold dish or anything else that, with the aid of sticks and stones could make a row, was brought into requisition for the serenade to the departing missionary until he could not hear himself speak.... Some cake and ale sent out only gave them monervigour and persistency. It was enough to distract a less irritable character. 'Here's some money, now clear off' he yelled with various adjectives as he threw out a number of pennies he had superheated on the school stove. How many were burned the story does not tell, but the numbers who vouched for the heat of those coppers also vouched for the increased heat of the serenade, and the still increasing heat of the schoolmaster-chemist's temper. Then he came outside, yelled out something, and threw among them some chemicals which scattered the whole crowd like frightened sheép.... The band ceased to play, and the report went abroad that he had thrown vitriol in their faces, though nobody showed any scars.³⁵

34 C. Brunsdon Fletcher, The Black Knight of the Pacific (Sydney, 1944), p.131.

35 Roberts, Tamai, pp.13, 14.

Baker was 'examined for the ministry' on 7 January 1860³⁶ and was found to have many of the characteristics considered desirable in missionaries: he was, as Thurston described, 'a bold, active...man possessing much force of character and no small share of natural ability';³⁷ he had had an active church life, was an accredited local preacher and, as the Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record noted, he 'witnessed a good confession as to his conversion to God and his call to the ministry of the word of life';³⁸ he had experience as a teacher and education was an important missionary responsibility; perhaps most important, he knew a little about medicine and the dispensing of drugs, which on a mission station would be a most valuable asset. The Missionary Committee, the Executive body of the Missionary Society, therefore recommended that Baker be accepted and in April 1860 he was ordered to travel to Sydney to be ordained.³⁹ His departure from Castlemaine passed unnoticed, for in the same week Robert O'Hara Burke left there to lead his ill-fated exploring expedition to the Gulf and the local newspaper was too preoccupied with Burke to notice Baker.⁴⁰

36 Baker, Memoirs, p.5.

37 Thurston to Colonel Stanley, 21 January 1886, F.O.C.P. 5310, no.120, enc.1.

38 The Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 14 July 1860.

39 Baker, Memoirs, p.5.

40 The Castlemaine Advertiser, 23 June 1860, 30 June 1860.

Baker was ordained a Wesleyan minister on 13 July 1860 and five days later he embarked with his wife on the schooner Jennie Dove, and set sail for Tonga and the station of Ha'apai, to which he had been appointed.⁴¹ The voyage took a full month, and in the cramped cabin of the tiny ship conditions must have been wretched, especially for the missionary's young wife who was in her seventh month of pregnancy. A few days out of Sydney the vessel was caught in a gale and was hove to for three days, pitching and rolling, with the sea coming over the decks. After the gale had blown itself out the schooner resumed her voyage only to be overtaken that evening by a sudden squall in which she nearly foundered. Baker described the scene in his first letter home: 'her bows were diving down into the sea, the ladies screaming and everything falling - we expected to go to the bottom'.⁴² Finally, however, on 14 August 1860, the schooner passed the small island of Malinoa, negotiated the passage through the reefs and dropped anchor off the village of Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga.

AT the time of Baker's arrival, Nuku'alofa was mainly composed of small oval houses made of coconut thatch, with grassed roadways between the allotments.

Immediately opposite the landing place was the mala'e, an open village green dividing the town into two

41 Baker, Memoirs, p.5.

42 Baker to the Rev. John Eggleston, 18 August 1860, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.

sections; the old town, Kolomotu'a to the right, and the new town, Kolofo'ou, to the left. To the extreme left along the foreshore was a cluster of wooden dwellings which housed the small colony of European traders, but these were not so imposing as three large native style buildings to the near right. The first of these stood on a small hill called Saione or Mt Zion and was the Wesleyan Church. The others were the dwellings of the Rev. John Whewell, resident missionary, and of George Tupou, Tu'i Kanokupolu and King of Tonga.⁴³ Baker left no description of the people who welcomed him, but they must have looked very much as H.N. Moseley, a naturalist who visited Tonga in 1873, described them:

The Tongans were naked except for a cotton cloth round the waist, and one of them a fuller girdle of green Screw Pine leaves; they all had, however, linen shirts, which they put on as they got cool...a Matoobooloo, or lord...wore besides a pea jacket.... They were remarkably fine men, with all their muscles well developed, and all of them extremely well nourished.... The women are large, they have fine figures and are, most of them, handsome. They wear a cotton cloth around the loins, reaching down below the knees....

43 This description is based on several nearly contemporary accounts: Capt. Elphinstone Erskine, Journal of a Cruise among the Islands of the Western Pacific, including the Feegees and others inhabited by the Polynesians and Negro Races, in H.M.S. Havannah (London, 1853), pp.121, 122; Young, Journal of a Deputation, pp.74-89; West, Ten Years in South Central Polynesia, pp.39-47; Lieut. Herbert Meade, A Ride through the Disturbed Districts of New Zealand, together with some Account of the South Sea Islands (London, 1871), pp.203-5.

The missionaries have compelled them to cover their breasts, which is done with a flap of cloth thrown up in front.... The women however, evidently have little idea of shame in the matter; and often the cloth is put on so loosely that it affords no cover at all.⁴⁴

Baker was evidently enchanted with what he saw and four days after his arrival he wrote to the Rev. John Eggleston, the secretary of the Missionary Committee: 'Tonga is a beautiful place and I think I will get on first rate with the natives'.⁴⁵

An ability to 'get on with the natives' was not generally considered to be a necessary accomplishment for a Wesleyan missionary in Tonga. In the first place, Tonga had been converted to Christianity largely through the military conquests of Tupou, and the missionaries had found little need to develop a grass-roots following, or to have close relations with their adherents. In the second place, owing to their position as advisers to the King, the missionaries had been afforded a high rank in Tongan society and were thus separated from the ordinary Tongans by a great gulf of social distance. As a result they tended to keep aloof from the Tongans and to adopt a peremptory and dictatorial attitude towards them. Commodore Erskine, who visited Tonga on H.M.S. Havannah in 1853, noted in his journal:

44 H.N. Moseley, Notes by a Naturalist on the 'Challenger' (London, 1879), pp.283, 287.

45 Baker to Eggleston, 18 August 1860, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.

I am indeed bound to remark that in respect of their treatment of the people here [Ha'apai] and in Vavau the gentlemen of the mission do not compare favourably with those of the London Society in the Samoan Islands. A more dictatorial spirit towards the chiefs and people seemed to show itself; and one of the missionaries in my presence sharply reprove Vuke, a man of high rank in his own country, for presuming to speak to him in a standing posture.... The missionaries also seemed to live much more apart from the natives than in Samoa, where free access is allowed to them at all times. Here on the contrary the gates of the enclosures were not merely kept closed, but sometimes locked, a precaution against intrusion which...I never saw adopted elsewhere and which must operate unfavourably to that freedom of intercourse so necessary to the establishment of perfect confidence between the pastors and their flock.⁴⁶

Lieut. Meade of H.M.S. Curacoa, who visited Tonga in 1865, recorded a similar impression:

The Wesleyan missionaries, Messrs. Whewell, Montrose and Stevenson [Stephinson], came off to call on the Commodore. Some of my messmates landed in their boat and were rather disgusted with the specimen they saw of the practical teaching of the religion of love and gentleness. One of the natives had brought down Mr. Whewell's horse to meet him and had ridden rather too fast I suppose; for, the moment he got off Mr. Whewell ran at him, took the riding whip out of his hand and began laying it about his bare back in a very vigorous style. The native, who was big enough to have eaten him, took his thrashing without offering to raise his hand.⁴⁷

Baker, however, did not accept the social conventions of the other missionaries. Almost at once

46 Erskine, Journal of a Cruise, p.131.

47 Meade, A Ride through New Zealand, p.306.

he began seeking Tongan companions to teach him the language, and in his first letter to Sydney he wrote: 'I find by associating with the natives and saying to them "ono higoa" - name this - I can get hold of the accent'.⁴⁸ By this direct method he acquired a working knowledge of the language very rapidly.

Lawry, the first Wesleyan missionary in Tonga, had spent over a year at Mu'a in the early twenties and had gathered in that time only a rudimentary smattering of Tongan.⁴⁹ Baker, on the other hand, could inform his superiors two months after his arrival that he was conducting the whole of the services, hymns, lessons, prayers, and even baptisms in Tongan without a book and was, within a week of writing, to attempt his first sermon in the language.⁵⁰ His eagerness to learn, his ebullient personality, and his lively, slightly coarse sense of humour rapidly won the confidence of the Tongans. His prestige was also greatly enhanced by his knowledge of medicine.

Owing to the Tongans' lack of resistance to introduced diseases and the absence of any form of quarantine, Tonga was frequently visited by epidemics which took a dreadful toll of the population. Such an epidemic was raging when Baker arrived in Tonga. It

48 Baker to Eggleston, 18 August 1860, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.

49 Hammer, The Early Years of the Mission in Tonga, p.35.

50 Baker to Eggleston, 29 October 1860, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

had already carried off the wife of one of the missionaries, Mrs Adams,⁵¹ and had, according to Whewell, 'prostrated nearly the whole population and removed many valuable labourers to the rest that remains for the people of God'.⁵² The medical knowledge of the missionaries was very limited; as the Rev. George Lee wrote in 1857 from Tonga:

I have no lance or surgical instruments and here I must be a doctor - whether I know or not I must prescribe for them...I am yet a very poor physician - I cannot do without my book.⁵³

From all accounts Lee was typical. Baker's arrival was therefore timely, for while his training was not very extensive he had at least some knowledge of the dispensing of drugs and some practical experience. Therefore, instead of being sent to take up his station at Ha'apai, he was retained in Nuku'alofa to help tend the sick. One of his first patients was his wife, who gave birth to a daughter, Alice, on 20 September 1860.⁵⁴ This success probably encouraged the Tongans to seek his assistance, for by October he reported that he was attending thirty or forty

51 The Wesleyan Missionary Notices, Relating to Missions under the Direction of the Australasian Wesleyan-Methodist Conference [cited henceforth as Missionary Notices], January 1860, p.162, letter from Whewell dated 27 May 1859.

52 Report A.W.M.M.S. 1860-61, p.20.

53 Rev. G. Lee [to Eggleston?], 6 August 1857, M.O.M.C., set 166.

54 Baker to Eggleston, 29 October 1860, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

Tongan patients every day.⁵⁵

Baker's services in Tonga were evidently considered valuable by the other missionaries, for at their annual District Meeting, held in December 1860, they decided not to post Baker at Ha'apai, as the Committee had recommended, but to retain him in Tonga, where he was put in charge of Mu'a, the old capital in Hahake, the eastern district of Tongatapu.⁵⁶ This was an implied compliment, for Mu'a had never been an easy mission assignment. Ten years later it was described by the Rev. George Minns, the missionary there, as 'the most difficult and barren in the Friendly Islands'. Minns reported that:

While other parts of the District have experienced revivals and have reported great material prosperity, Hahake has dwelt in sackcloth and the missionary has mourned over the indifference and unbelief of the people.⁵⁷

The lack of enthusiasm for the mission which was shown in Hahake had political rather than religious roots. The people of Hahake were traditionally opposed to the people of Hihifo and their chief, the Tu'i Kanokupolu, whose assumption of the royal authority they regarded as an usurpation of the rights of the Mu'a chiefs, the Tu'i Tonga and Tungī. Laufilitonga, the Tu'i Tonga, had demonstrated his opposition to Tupou by becoming a Roman Catholic, and exercised his influence in Mu'a

55 Ibid.

56 Report A.W.M.M.S. 1860-61, p.20.

57 Missionary Notices, April 1871, p.255, letter from Minns dated 4 November 1870.

against Tupou and his ally, the Wesleyan mission.⁵⁸

'Uiliame Tungī, the heir to the lapsed Tu'i Ha'atakalaua title, also lived in Mu'a, and although he had become a Wesleyan in 1850, his conversion had been motivated primarily by a desire to salvage something from the wreck of his fortunes when the heathen and Catholic causes were demolished.⁵⁹ His faith was therefore only lukewarm, and the Mu'a flock reflected the attitude of its leader.

Baker began work in this forbidding district on 20 December 1860, and while his labours made little impression against the apathy of the Mu'a people, his energy and enthusiasm certainly impressed 'Father' Calvert, who visited Tonga in June 1861 and noted in his diary: 'Mr Baker is likely to do well in the work. I like the look of him'.⁶⁰ In one field, however, Baker did achieve something of significance. Education had been considered from the earliest days of the mission one of the first responsibilities of the missionaries, but no attempt had been made to provide anything other than a very elementary training in reading and arithmetic. There was, however, a need for some further training for those who wished to teach in the schools or take office in the church as

58 Ibid.: 'a very large proportion of the Romish Church [in Mu'a] are in some way connected with the Tui Tonga family and are more or less unfriendly to the King, and enemies of the constitution of the Tonga Govt.'.

59 West, Ten Years in South Central Polynesia, p.296.

60 James Calvert, Journal, May 1861.

local preachers. The Rev. J. Thomas had published an appeal in the Missionary Notices in 1859 for some missionary to undertake this work,⁶¹ and Baker took up the challenge. He persuaded Tungī to give him an allotment and set to work to build on it: 'an institution for the training of native schoolmasters'.⁶² It began operation in April 1861, and although it was a makeshift affair with homemade equipment, it fulfilled an important need in the mission education system. Realising this, the Missionary Committee recommended that Baker should be permanently employed as master in charge of a 'native training institution', but Baker vigorously objected. He had, he said, come to Tonga 'to hold the high office of a Wesleyan missionary to the heathen of the South Sea Islands';⁶³ not to be a schoolteacher. He had done enough teaching at Old Post Office Hill, and felt, as he put it, 'no earnest desire again to train the young'.⁶⁴ So the Committee relinquished for the time being its higher education project, and appointed Baker to Ha'apai.⁶⁵

61 Missionary Notices, July 1859, p.133, letter from Thomas dated 28 April 1859.

62 Missionary Notices, July 1861, p.264, letter from Baker dated 4 April 1861.

63 Baker to Eggleston, 18 August 1860, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.

64 Baker to Eggleston, 18 December 1861, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

65 Report A.W.M.M.S. 1861-62, p.27.

CHAPTER 3

THE KING'S ADVISER

BEFORE Baker could take up his new appointment in Ha'apai missionary affairs were thrown into confusion and the mission's arrangements suspended by a serious dispute which flared up between the mission and the King. In January 1862 the death occurred of Prince Vuna, the seventeen year old heir of Tupou, and his only son who was legitimate by Christian standards. All Tonga mourned for the Prince, and to show their grief the people performed a tukuofu, a ritual presentation of food and mats to the dead, on the occasion of Vuna's funeral at 'Uiha in Ha'apai. The missionary who conducted the funeral was the Rev. W.G R. Stephinson, a young man of great zeal but little discretion, and he was so scandalised by the heathen implications of the tukuofu that he publicly reprimanded the King for allowing it. The Rev. Walter Davis, Stephinson's superior at Ha'apai and the Chairman of the Friendly Islands District, supported him by invoking church discipline against all who took part in the ritual, and as a result relations between the King and the missionaries became strained to breaking point, and the mission faced a serious crisis.¹

1 Details of the death of Vuna and the controversy over the tukuofu are given in: Missionary Notices, April 1862, letter from Davis, dated 23 January 1862; Baker to Eggleston, 18 February 1862, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101; Davis to Eggleston, 18 March 1862, M.O.M.C., set 170; Whewell to Eggleston, 23 June 1862, M.O.M.C., set 170; Baker, Memoirs, p.36.

Trouble had been brewing between the King and the mission for some years, for Tupou had been showing signs of a growing disquiet at the political influence wielded by the missionaries. While this influence was used in support of his government and against the heathen and Catholic chiefs the King had encouraged the missionaries, but when Tonga became involved with European powers the British sympathies of the missionaries aroused his suspicions. The first of the foreign powers seriously to threaten Tonga was France: for as early as 1841 Captain du Bouzet had visited Vava'u to demand of Tāufa'āhau that French priests be admitted to his domains.² At the time the incident did not seem very serious, but the gravity of the French threat to small island states was demonstrated the following year when France annexed the Marquesas, and the year after when it ratified the protectorate which Du Petit-Thouars had established over the Society Islands. On the advice of the missionaries Siosaia Tupou, the then Tu'i Kanokupolu, had appealed in 1844 for British protection,³ and in 1848 Siosaia Tupou, his successor, had renewed the request. However, Tupou's faith in his missionary friends was diminished when he discovered that, either through a mistake in translation or through wishful thinking on the part of Lawry, the missionary who delivered the message, Sir George Grey was led to

2 Farmer, Tonga and the Friendly Islands, pp.360-3.

3 Ibid., p.364.

believe that Tupou and his people wished to become 'not merely the Allies but the Subjects of the Queen'.⁴ When this was more closely inquired into, it was discovered that Tupou had no intention of surrendering his sovereignty;⁵ he had fought too hard to win his domains to consider surrendering them at the first alarm. Thereafter he was to view the missionaries and their motherland with some suspicion. Peter Turner wrote from Vava'u in 1850: 'the people are very jealous of foreign interference and sometimes even question the motives of the missionaries, whether they may not wish to bring them under some foreign government'.⁶

Over the next decade the involvement of the great powers in Oceania markedly increased. In 1853 the French occupied New Caledonia. In 1855 du Bouzet again visited Tonga, and this time Tupou was entertained on board ship and allegedly made drunk on French champagne, in which state he signed a treaty guaranteeing equality for Catholics and restoration of their property.⁷ This was followed up in 1860 with a further French visit, accompanied

4 Lawry, Friendly and Feegee Islands, p.24.

5 Missionary Notices, October 1851, extract from Lawry's journal dated 5 June 1850; Hammer, pp.154, 155.

6 Missionary Notices, May 1851, p.71, letter from the Rev. Peter Turner dated 11 June 1850.

7 Julius L. Brenchley, Cruise of the Curacoa (London, 1873), p.118; Convention between Tupou...and M. Du Bouzet..., F.O.C.P. 5421, no.230, enc.2.

by additional demands and backed by a threat to deport the King if they were not met.⁸ Faced with this increasing pressure and perhaps reassured by Britain's polite refusal to annex Tonga in 1848,⁹ Tupou made another approach to the British; though this time he was careful to be very specific about his desire to remain independent. In 1856 he addressed a letter to Queen Victoria seeking a treaty with Britain:

We are a weak and small Kingdom and fear the encroachments of the great foreign powers. We desire to retain our lands, rule our people in the fear of God, and live in peace. And we entreat that our independent existence as a Kingdom may be recognised by Your Majesty and guaranteed to us.¹⁰

Any confidence which Tupou had in Britain, however, was rudely shattered in 1858 when news leaked to Tonga that arrangements were being made for Britain to annex Fiji. In the words of one observer, when Tupou heard of this he 'was dead with crying'.¹¹

Meanwhile the German firm of J.C. Godeffroy and Son had established its headquarters in Samoa and from 1857 began setting up a vast commercial network

8 Memorandum by A.H. Oakes, 21 December 1886, F.O.C.P. 5421, no.230.

9 Morrell, Britain in the Pacific Islands, p.312.

10 Tupou to Queen Victoria, 12 May 1856, Wesleyan Mission Papers in the Manuscript Collection of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand [cited henceforth as Wesleyan Mission Papers], set 16.

11 J.D. Legge, Britain in Fiji 1858-1880 (London, 1958), p.27.

throughout the Western Pacific, thus bringing the interests of another European nation close to Tonga.¹²

Tupou's increasing apprehension that the missionaries were, in effect, a British fifth column within his Kingdom, led him to seek advice outside the missionary circle. He was aware that Hawaii had been in jeopardy in 1843, and that it had been saved, and its independence guaranteed, by a self-denying ordinance between France and Britain 'reciprocally to consider the Sandwich Islands as an independent State, and never to take possession...of any part of the territory of which they are composed'.¹³ Tupou was anxious to discover the secret of Hawaii's success, and an opportunity of doing so came in 1854, with the visit to Tonga of Henry de Boos, the consular attaché of Charles St Julian, Hawaiian Consul-General for Australia and the Western Pacific. Tupou's enquiries led to a correspondence with St Julian, who advised him to reorganise his Kingdom along western lines and to give it a constitution and a code of laws which would win international approval and establish Tonga as a civilised power in the eyes of the world. Then, argued St Julian, Tonga would be able to enter into treaty relations with the powers, and its independence would be guaranteed by international law.¹⁴

12 Morrell, Britain in the Pacific Islands, pp.209-10.

13 Ibid., p.85.

14 Tupou to St Julian, 24 November 1854; St Julian to Tupou, 25 June 1855; St Julian to Tupou, 15 October 1855: all from Foreign Office and External Papers, Archives of Hawaii, Honolulu.

St Julian's intervention was regarded by the missionaries in Tonga as an unwarranted interference on their own preserves, and when they discovered that he was seeking an exaquatour from the British Government to act as British Consul in Tonga, they memorialised Britain's Secretary of State for the Colonies objecting to his appointment.¹⁵ Whether or not Tupou learned of this petition, he certainly knew that the missionaries objected to St Julian's appointment, and he suspected their motives, so that by the end of the fifties a serious rift had developed between the King and the mission. In 1859, when the Rev. John Thomas left Tonga after a stay of some 30 years as the King's spiritual and political adviser, Tupou did not even bother to come and see him off,¹⁶ and in 1862 the Chairman of the district admitted that the King's religious enthusiasm had waned. He confided to Eggleston, the Mission Secretary in Australia: 'We are not ignorant that for several years injurious influences have been at work in the mind of the King. He has had many evil advisers and strong temptations and has yielded to them...we have our fears that he has sadly backslided'.¹⁷

-
- 15 John Eggleston to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, n.d., M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.
- 16 Rev. John Thomas, Journal, 13 September 1859, Personal Papers Collection, Records of the Methodist Missionary Society, London.
- 17 Davis to Eggleston, 18 March 1862, M.O.M.C., set 170.

In 1859 Tupou decided to dispense with missionary advice altogether, and to carry out reforms by himself along the lines suggested by St Julian. He convened a great fakataha, or meeting of the chiefs, to discuss the problem. However, the task of modernising Tonga and imposing western civilisation on it was very complex and little progress was made. A second fakataha held in Ha'apai in 1860 and a third in Vava'u in 1861 were alike unsuccessful.¹⁸ The crux of the matter, Tupou realised, was to raise the status of the common people, over whom the power of the chiefs was still almost absolute. Christianity had, it is true, taken the sharper edges off chiefly sanctions and it was no longer possible for a Fīnau to shoot a commoner to test the efficacy of a gun,¹⁹ or a Tuku'aho to cut off his cooks' arms to make his servants look different from those of other chiefs.²⁰ A chief's pre-emptive sexual rights to all the females of his kāinga²¹ had also been weakened by the Wesleyan moral code. But if a chief had lost his power over his peoples' bodies and souls, he still kept tight control over their labour and worldly

18 Missionary Notices, January 1862, p.293, letter from the Rev. G. Lee dated 4 September 1861; James Calvert, Journal, May 1861.

19 Mariner, An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands, vol.1, p.60.

20 Ibid., p.70.

21 Gifford, Tongan Society, p.184: 'a sort of pre-emptive right to all the women of their district was accepted by the people as a chief's prerogative'.

possessions. In consequence all the missionaries' exhortations failed to convince the people of the advantages of labouring and cultivating industrious habits, when the products of a commoner's labour would almost certainly be confiscated by his chief. The accumulation of wealth and property was further inhibited by the Tongan system of familial relationships by which every individual was fahu or higher in rank with respect to someone else, and the custom by which the fahu could beg or demand any property of his inferior, who could not refuse the request. As a result the Tongan commoner did as little as he could, he saved nothing, he bought little, and he showed no interest in developing his lands.

St Julian had warned Tupou that if the Tongans did not develop their own country and make it productive, white men would not stand idly by and see it go to waste.²² Tupou, realising that no development could be effected without limiting the chiefs' authority over their people, proposed to the 1861 fakataha the abolition of fatongia; the traditional obligations and duties accorded by the people to their chiefs. The chiefs, however, vigorously opposed any infringement of their privileges and, led by Tungi,

22 St Julian to Tupou, 15 October 1855, Foreign Office and External Papers, Archives of Hawaii, Honolulu.

strongly resisted the King's proposal.²³ According to an informant, whose father was at the Vava'u fakataha, Tungī said to Tupou: 'Tupou, you are king and you are the ruler. You have this country. Why do you want to take away from us our little property';²⁴ while according to another informant Tungī said: 'Do not take away the fatongia, only the ngia (small part)'. The latter informant claimed that of the fifty-eight chiefs who met at Vava'u only three supported the King.²⁵

Faced with the opposition of his chiefs, or perhaps because he did not have a European adviser to help him frame his proposals in concrete form, Tupou did not persist in his plan to abolish the fatongia, and little came of the three great ngaahi fakataha²⁶ except an examination of certain Tongan customs. Some of these, it was decided, were barbarous and were abolished, but others, including the controversial

23 Basil Thomson, Memorandum on Tongan Affairs, n.d., Western Pacific High Commission, Inwards Correspondence (General), 1891 file, item no.276, Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva [cited henceforth as W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 276/1891, and similarly for the other files and items in the series].

24 Statement by Feiloakitau Kaho during an interview with the writer at Nuku'alofa in November 1963.

25 Statement by Siola's Soakai during an interview with the writer at Pangai, November 1963. Soakai's grandfather was present at the 1861 fakataha.

26 Plural form of fakataha.

tukuofu, were approved and retained.²⁷

The missionaries regarded the holding of the ngaahi fakataha as an attempt on the part of the King to manage without their services, and they registered their strong disapproval of the meetings. In 1861 Lee complained that they merely encouraged gluttony, waste and extravagance, and reported that 80,700 yams, 2,543 pigs and 130 turtles had been consumed by the chiefs at the Vava'u fakataha.²⁸ Davis blamed the meetings for causing 'spiritual dissipation', and in the Ha'apai Circuit Report for 1861 he wrote:

The effect of such immense gatherings under circumstances the most exciting, and for purposes of purely a worldly character, is acting prejudicially on the piety of many who have but lately started in their career of holiness, and on the church at large a withering and most pernicious influence.²⁹

Thus Stephinson's action with regard to the tukuofu and Davis' support for his junior's stand were manifestations of a deeply felt antipathy among the missionaries towards the ngaahi fakataha, and were an attempt to assert the superiority of the ecclesiastical over the temporal authority. The King recognised that the incident was not only a personal affront, but also a trial of strength between church

27 Whewell to Eggleston, 23 June 1862, M.O.M.C., set 170.

28 Missionary Notices, January 1862, p.293, letter from Lee dated 4 September 1861.

29 Report A.W.M.M.S. 1861-62, p.29.

and state, and his reply was dramatic and decisive. He relinquished his church office, revoked his membership and cast the mission adrift to shift for itself.³⁰ Hundreds of his subjects, who had only joined the church out of loyalty to the King, and who had been restive under the moral prohibitions of Methodism, followed his example.³¹

For the mission the situation was very serious, and when news of the King's estrangement reached Sydney it caused consternation in the Missionary Committee, whose members well knew that the success of the mission depended largely on royal support. Davis wrote to the Committee justifying his stand and declaring: 'We must be prepared to do battle with the enemy in high places';³² but Eggleston, the Secretary of the Committee, dismissed his explanations with scarcely restrained anger:

If this means 'do battle with those who speak evil of dignities and bring the discipline of the church to bear upon slanderers and backbiters' I think you have the word of God on your side.... But if 'doing battle' is opposing George and his chiefs in their political measures, or giving countenance to their slanderers and defamers neither God nor man ought to wish prosperity to such conduct.³³

30 Whewell to Eggleston, 23 June 1862, M.O.M.C., set 170.

31 Baker to Eggleston, 21 April 1863, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

32 Davis to Eggleston, 18 March 1862, M.O.M.C., set 170.

33 Eggleston to Davis, n.d., M.O.M.C., set 169.

Stephinson was to have exchanged places with Baker early in 1862, but as his presence in Tongatapu would only further antagonise the King he was kept back in Ha'apai, and Baker stayed on at Mu'a. Unfortunately Eggleston's instructions to the missionaries in Tongatapu have not survived, but presumably he enjoined them to do everything possible to regain the King's confidence and to win him back to the church. For Whewell such a task would have been difficult, for he was ingrained in the old attitudes; for the Rev. John Clifton at Hihifo it would have been impossible, for he was mild, self-effacing, and only just beginning to learn the language;³⁴ the responsibility therefore devolved upon Shirley Baker.

By 1862 Baker was already well-known to the King. His medical duties brought him frequently to Nuku'alofa and, as Queen Salote suffered from elephantiasis, he was probably a regular visitor at the King's house.³⁵ An indication of Tupou's regard for Baker was given in April 1862, when W.T. Pritchard, the British Consul in Fiji, arrived in Nuku'alofa to complain of Tongan aggression in the Lau Islands. Tupou had sent Ma'afu'otu'itonga to govern Lau in 1848, and under his leadership Tongan influence in Fiji greatly increased. By 1862 it seemed possible

34 Whewell to Eggleston, 2 February 1862, M.O.M.C., set 170.

35 Meade, A Ride through New Zealand, p.211.

that Ma'afu would overthrow Cakobau, the leading chief of Fiji, and bring the whole country under Tongan rule. Pritchard, however, had plans of his own for Fiji and had already arranged with Cakobau for the cession of the territory to the British Crown, an offer which was at the time being considered by the home authorities. Therefore, when rumours reached Levuka in 1862 that Ma'afu and Tupou were plotting a joint invasion of Fiji, Pritchard sailed to Tonga to warn Tupou that he would be held personally responsible for any damage to British property or interests which might occur as the result of the war.³⁶ Tupou, unpractised in the European art of diplomatic negotiation, was compelled to call on the missionaries for advice. Whewell was invited out of respect to his seniority, but Tupou also asked Baker to attend to represent his interests.³⁷ The agreement which resulted from the meetings could not be described as a diplomatic triumph for Tonga, for Tupou was forced to agree not to make war in Fiji until Britain had made a decision on the offer of cession;³⁸ but the King was sufficiently impressed

36 Pritchard to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 15 May 1862, 'F. Separate', Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva.

37 Ibid.

38 Agreement between George Tubou and Will. T. Pritchard, 5 May 1862, H.B.M. Consul Fiji, Misc. Papers on Fiji-Tonga Relations 1862-1869, Folder (9), Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva.

by Baker's acumen and readiness to be of service that he sought his advice on the political and social reforms which he intended to resubmit to the 1862 fakataha.

When Baker later had to explain to his superiors why he had meddled in local politics, he described what had happened:

With regard to the new laws the king asked me my advice and opinions etc. I replied I was a junior minister, it would be better for him to ask one of the Senior brethren. He said he would not ask me to do or say anything which might grieve another - he asked me not as a minister but a friend. I said on this conditions I would give him any advice or anything he wanted - the result is that most of the new laws are the result of my conversations with the King. I wrote them and they are printed almost exactly.³⁹

Probably all that Baker really did was to embody the King's ideas in a set of concrete written proposals, but this was all that Tupou in fact needed. When the fakataha convened in Nuku'alofa in May 1862 he put forward a new and comprehensive code of laws, and demanded that they should be approved. Cowed by the King's intransigence the chiefs gave their grudging acquiescence; in Baker's words Tupou 'had to do it alone, in spite of his chiefs, in spite of deep rooted prejudice'.⁴⁰ The result was a reform of great significance which was to alter completely the shape of Tongan society.

39 Baker to Eggleston, 21 April 1863, M O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

40 Baker to Eggleston, 19 December 1863, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

In most of its clauses the new code paralleled that issued ten years earlier, although in the new version the King was brought within the law and stress was laid on the duties rather than the privileges of the governors and chiefs. Another innovation was to make school attendance compulsory, making Tonga one of the very first states to introduce free and compulsory education. The most significant feature of the new code, however, was the freeing of the people from the control of their chiefs, or as it became known, the Emancipation Edict. This declared that:

All chiefs and people are...set at liberty from serfdom and all vassalage...and it shall not be lawful for any chief or person to seize or take by force or beg authoritatively in Tonga-fashion anything from anyone. Everyone has the entire control over everything that is his.⁴¹

Prior to 1862 the King had relied on fatongia to provision his canoes for voyages, to provide the wherewithal for state feasts and to carry out such public works as were undertaken. Under the new laws the only free service the people were obliged to provide was the clearing and hoeing of the public roads along their frontages, all other services being paid for by the State. To provide an income to defray the cost of these services an annual tax of three dollars was levied on all males aged sixteen years and over, and it was consequently necessary to ensure that the people had the means to pay the taxes. Baker later

41 Missionary Notices, January 1863, pp.343-9, gives full text of the laws.

claimed that the plan adopted originated from him: 'After I succeeded in getting his majesty to set his people free, one part of my scheme was that every native who paid his taxes should have the means of doing so by having a portion of land allotted out to him'.⁴² A provision was therefore included in the legislation instructing the chiefs to allot farms to each of their followers proportional in size to the number in the tenant family; and so long as a tenant paid his taxes and an annual rent of two shillings to his chief, he was guaranteed security of tenure.

The new code was presented to the people on 4 June 1862 at an impressive ceremony in Nuku'alofa. For the readers of the Missionary Notices Baker described the scene in the turgid prose he used for such occasions:

It would require a more graphic pencil than mine to picture correctly the impressive sight that then burst upon our view, some four or five thousand natives of Tonga, Fiji and Samoa clad in garbs of various hues, sitting together in solemn silence under the spreading branches of the Ovava tree.... See yonder in the cool shade of the spreading tree sits in solemn majesty George, King of Tonga...and if pen cannot describe the sight, how can it describe the feelings of that assembled throng when my respected superintendant gave out the hymn:

"Jesus shall reign where 'ere the sun
Doth his successive journeys run".⁴³

42 Tonga Government Blue Book Containing a List of Charges Brought by the Premier of Tonga...against the Rev. J.E. Moulton..., 7 November 1883, p.16 [Tonga Government Blue Books, cited hereafter as T.G.B.B.].

43 Missionary Notices, January 1863, pp.349-50 letter from Baker dated 11 August 1862.

It was Baker's great moment. He wrote: 'If ever I felt the burning zeal and ardent love of a missionary, it was then'.⁴⁴

Baker's enthusiasm for the new legislation was not unfounded, for it soon began to show results. One of the King's aims in promulgating the code had been to demonstrate to the world that Tonga was a civilised state worthy of recognition, and the new laws did receive favourable publicity. In Australia the full text of the code was published in a missionary paper as an example of 'the influence the gospel exerts in promoting the civilisation of a people'.⁴⁵ In England it was given lavish praise by the Rev. W.M. Punshon, the President of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, who wrote:

This extraordinary code is a model of jurisprudence...it is altogether free from what John Wesley called the 'villainous tautology of lawyers'; in plain straightforward speech it announces its meaning which nobody can misunderstand.... If the ethics of the transcendental and Godless philosophy had made a paradise in these far-off isles, how the world would have rung with the achievement. But it is the work of the Gospel of Christ; and though not among its noblest triumphs (for it is poor in comparison with the conversion of a single soul) yet it is a noble work notwithstanding.⁴⁶

Such words must have been balm of Gilead for both Baker and Tupou. The Great Powers, however, did

44 Ibid.

45 Missionary Notices, January 1863, p.343.

46 Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, July 1863, p.750.

not respond, at least immediately, in the expected manner and Tonga remained formally unrecognised. However, when H.M.S. Curacoa visited Tonga in 1865 her captain accorded Tupou a twenty one gun salute⁴⁷ and, as British ships before 1862 only offered thirteen guns,⁴⁸ Tupou may have been satisfied that he was moving in the right direction.

Another important effect of the reform was the reduction of the independent power and influence of the chiefs which, under the old order, had been a constant threat to unity and peace. The 1850 Code had attempted to make the chiefs more dependent upon the King, but as long as the chiefs commanded the unquestioning obedience of their ngaahi Kāinga they were a potentially disruptive force, and were only restrained by the military power of Tupou. The new laws sapped the autonomy of the chiefs in two directions. On the one hand the people were freed from their control; this was a social revolution and was slow to take effect, but as the common people gradually came to understand and to take pride in their freedom, so the privileges and personal authority of the chiefs withered. The main sanction supporting a chief's authority had been his right to withhold land from a member of his Kāinga, and with the guaranteed rights of tenure granted to the common people by the new code

47 Commodore Hoskins to the Secretary of the Admiralty, 19 May 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.6, enc.1.

48 Erskine, Journal of a Cruise, p.125.

this sanction was partially removed. The relationship between chief and follower thus gradually degenerated to that between landlord and tenant. On the other hand the chiefs became financially dependent upon the King; to compensate them for the loss of their privileges the King paid them generous stipends out of the tax revenue and they soon came to rely on this cash income.⁴⁹ As pensioners dependent on the bounty of the King they rapidly lost the ability, and even the desire, to oppose his will.

Probably the most important effect of the reforms was, however, the impetus which it gave to an agricultural revolution in Tonga through which subsistence agriculture came to be increasingly supplemented by cash cropping. In part this was caused by the abolition of the fatongia and fahu exactions, which had stifled any incentive among the commoners to earn money or acquire goods; in part it was caused by the new demands for money to pay taxes and land rents; and in part it resulted from the security of land tenure which the commoners were guaranteed by the new code. In 1879 A.P. Maudslay, the British Vice-Consul in Tonga, believed that this last had been the most important factor. He reported:

In 1862...every taxpayer was, under the most solemn oaths taken by the King and Chiefs, guaranteed a good title to his town plot and

49 Acting Consul-General Maudslay to the Marquis of Salisbury, No.1 Consular, 23 January 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.44.

country land, with liberty to bequeath his title to his heirs and successors. This plan was...a great success. Feeling secure of their lands the people set to work to plant coconuts with so much industry that in a few years the exports of the country were increased enormously.⁵⁰

The buoyancy in the Tongan economy which followed widespread cash cropping brought many changes. The King had a revenue and spent it largely on public buildings and harbour installations, so that Nuku'alofa began to change from a village of thatch huts to the likeness of a European town. After paying their taxes the people had a surplus, and either gave it to the mission, which spent it on building churches and schools, or used it to buy goods from the traders, who began to move to Tonga in increasing numbers to take advantage of the new opportunities.

The promulgation of the code of 1862 was therefore a most significant event and brought important social, political and economic improvements to Tonga. Baker could justly feel proud at being associated with it. However, the other missionaries were resentful at being eclipsed by their young colleague. Davis and Whewell both wrote to Sydney prophesying disaster for the mission.⁵¹ The taxes, they claimed, were more than the people could afford, and they would have nothing left to give to the church, while at the

50 Ibid.

51 Davis to Eggleston, 7 July 1862, M.O.M.C., set 170; Whewell to Eggleston, 23 June 1862, M.O.M.C., set 170.

same time church expenditure would increase because native ministers, who had in the past received no remuneration, would in future have to be paid a stipend so that they could pay their taxes. 'The result on your balance sheet will be anything but agreeable', warned Whewell. To Baker himself they became acrimonious. Writing some years later Baker recalled: 'When...I was the means of setting the people free and giving them the laws of 1862 every brother in the district...opposed it, denounced me, scolded me, did everything but suspending me'.⁵² In a mood of resentment and hostility the District Meeting convened in December 1862 and posted Baker to Ha'apai; a hundred miles away from Nuku'alofa and the ears of the king.⁵³

Within a few years the forebodings of Whewell and Davis were proved false and Baker was vindicated. In 1861 the cost of maintaining the mission had been £2,220, of which only £1,874 had been collected locally, £43 in cash and the remainder in the rather inconvenient form of coconut oil.⁵⁴ By 1866 local collections had risen to £3,770, of which £533 was in cash, while total expenses still remained at £2,421, the mission having thus, for the first time, become self supporting.⁵⁵ By 1869

⁵² Baker to the Rev. Benjamin Chapman, 3 May 1876, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

⁵³ Report A.W.M.M.S., 1862-63, p.33.

⁵⁴ Report A.W.M.M.S., 1861-62, p.82.

⁵⁵ Report A.W.M.M.S., 1866-67, p.110.

the mission collected £4,558 in cash and £922 in oil, the total being nearly £3,000 in excess of local expenditure.⁵⁶ In 1863, however, all this lay in the future and Baker was viewed with suspicion and hostility by the brethren. Eggleston, the Secretary of the parent body in Sydney, supported him: the reforms, he advised Davis, 'evince a wisdom that does honour to your king...he should receive sympathy and encouragement'.⁵⁷ But even when the King, his confidence in the missionaries restored, rejoined the church early in 1864,⁵⁸ jealousy still rankled among the small band of missionaries.

Baker felt again the edge of his brethren's rancour in 1864. In Ha'apai he spent much of his time attending the sick and, as he had to buy his own medicines, he made a charge for his services. It is not clear what his usual fee was, for when an official complaint was made by E.L. Layard in 1876 that 'Mr Baker refuses to administer a single dose of epsom salts without his fee of a dollar and a half',⁵⁹ Baker protested:

To say I make a charge is the grossest falsehood. I have never done so, saving in cases as other missionaries do, with the natives when requiring

56 Report A.W.M.M.S., 1869-70, p.118.

57 Eggleston to Davis, n.d., M.O.M.C., set 169.

58 Circular letter from Eggleston, 3 March 1864, M.O.M.C., set 34.

59 Consul E.L. Layard to the Earl of Derby, 8 March 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.1.

medicines for a native disease here, and that is generally a pig.⁶⁰

Under normal circumstances no one would have noticed Baker adding a few feathers to his own nest in the process of carrying out his work as a missionary, but in 1864 he broadened the scope of his activities by vaccinating 3,000 Tongans against smallpox,⁶¹ and in a programme of such magnitude the fees, whether in dollars or pigs, came to a substantial sum. The other missionaries felt, perhaps with some justification, that Baker's philanthropy was heavily weighted with a profit motive, and at the 1864 District Meeting they told him so in no uncertain terms. Baker confided to his journal: 'One of the missionaries spoke the most bitter things, also the chairman. He who judges all knows the motives by which I was actuated in vaccinating the poor Tongans'.⁶² But no matter how Baker might justify himself, there is little doubt that the other missionaries had touched a raw nerve, and had laid bare perhaps the worst trait in his character: he was avaricious. He hid his cupidity even from himself behind a veil of humbug (over the succeeding years he could be found doing all sorts of doubtful things, but he could never be found in the wrong), but his passion for acquiring wealth remained an irreconcilable contradiction of his professed missionary vocation.

60 Baker to Chapman, 13 November 1876, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 13.

61 Baker, Memoirs, p.10.

62 Ibid.

If Baker's relations with his fellow missionaries were something less than happy during these days, he was, it seems, on good terms with the other European residents. The traders were beginning to enjoy the increasing prosperity resulting from the reforms of 1862. Baker, moreover, made a point of never charging his European patients,⁶³ a morally peculiar but politically wise arrangement, and as a sign of their respect the European residents in Ha'apai made him the secretary of their association in 1864.⁶⁴ Of more importance was the esteem in which he was held by the King, who began making trips to Ha'apai to visit his young adviser.⁶⁵ On one such visit in 1863 he sought Baker's views on a flag for Tonga, having already sought the advice of his chiefs: as the rat was the only indigenous animal one chief had suggested that this would make a good motif; another argued for a rooster. Tupou, however, was not convinced that either of these designs would enhance his dignity, but on applying to Baker he was offered a simple design, a red flag with a white upper quadrant

63 Thomas Trood to Baker, 1 March 1876, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 14.

64 'Minutes of a Meeting of Europeans in Haapai held 23 August 1864', Copies of Despatches from the Vice-Consul, or Consul, Tonga, to the Consul, Fiji, or Consul General, 1864-1901, 1864 file, item no.5(a) enclosure, Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva [cited henceforth as F3/12/64 no.5(a), enc., and similarly for other items in the series].

65 Davis to Eggleston, 6 November 1863, M.O.M.C., set 170.

containing a red cross. When it was explained to him that the cross on the white ground stood for the Saviour, and the red field for His blood, shed for Tongans as for the world, the King felt he had found a worthy emblem.⁶⁶ The design was presented to the chiefs at the fakataha of 1864, held significantly at Ha'apai. During this fakataha Baker assisted the King to draw up a series of Municipal Laws, and Tupou, in return for his services offered to make him Premier.⁶⁷

Baker refused this honour. He knew that to accept it he would have to resign from the mission and commit his future to an ageing King who might at any time be succeeded by one less friendly and sympathetic. Another consideration was the health of his family, which was causing him grave concern. His second child, Shirley Jnr., had been born at Mu'a in March 1862, and following the confinement his wife was ill almost continuously.⁶⁸ In April 1863 he wrote to Sydney that the children were so sickly and

66 Details given by Siola'a Soakai at an interview with the writer in Ha'apai, November 1963. Soakai, an aged matāpule, is widely respected in Tonga as a repository of the oral tradition; see also: Baker, Memoirs, p.8.

67 R. Beckworth Leefe (H.B.M. Vice-Consul and Deputy-Commissioner for Tonga) to Sir John Thurston (Governor of Fiji and H.B.M. Consul-General and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific), 10 January 1889, F3/12/89, no.4; Baker, Memoirs, p.8.

68 Whewell to Eggleston, 7 May 1862, M.O.M.C., set 170; Baker to Eggleston, 14 August 1862, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

his wife's condition was so grave that he doubted they would ever see civilisation again.⁶⁹ By the end of that year they were no better and Baker warned the Missionary Committee that if matters did not improve he would apply to return.⁷⁰ When the third child, Beatrice, arrived soon after this Baker decided to leave the mission field, at least for a time. Permission was granted him to return to Australia early in 1866, and in April he took leave of his flock.⁷¹ In a private letter he had written, 'a removal down here is no farce, what with trade stores, pigs, fowls, cow, etc. all to be taken care of and provided for and no one to help but these stupid natives',⁷² but in writing for the readers of the Wesleyan missionary magazine his language was more tactful: 'I can only say that I wept and felt as much in parting from my Ha'apai flock, dark though their skins may be, as though I was parting from a people of my own nation and my own tongue'.⁷³

-
- 69 Baker to Eggleston, 21 April 1863, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.
- 70 Baker to Eggleston, 23 October 1863, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.
- 71 'Minutes of Local Preachers' Meeting, 12 April 1866', Minutes of Local Preachers Meetings for the Haabai Circuit 1861-1874, Papers of E.E.V. Collocott, MSS 207, item 13, the Mitchell Library, Sydney.
- 72 Baker to Eggleston, 19 December 1863, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.
- 73 Missionary Notices, October 1866, letter from Baker dated 24 September 1866.

Whatever his private feelings were, no one could doubt that he had left his mark on Tonga. The reforms of 1862, for which Baker could claim a large share of credit, were already taking effect and the Nuku'alofa which Baker left in 1866 was not the same village he had come to six years earlier. A fine new church, the biggest yet seen in the Friendly Islands, stood on Zion;⁷⁴ nearby, workmen were busy on a large two-storeyed wooden building which was to be the new Royal Palace;⁷⁵ while beside the house of the Wesleyan minister there was considerable activity, for here a college was taking shape under the supervision of the Rev. J.E. Moulton, the newly arrived headmaster.⁷⁶ Europeans had been attracted by the new trading possibilities and there were now fifty-four of them on Tongatapu, most of them living in Nuku'alofa.⁷⁷ On the mala'e a flagpole had been erected and from it fluttered the red cross of Tonga.

Baker, too, had prospered. When he first arrived in Mu'a he had complained to his superiors that if they didn't see fit to pay him more than 'stonebreakers' wages' he would have to go through the debtor's court;⁷⁸ but owing to his training in the

74 Missionary Notices, October 1865, p.530, letter from Whewell dated 10 July 1865.

75 Meade, A Ride through New Zealand, p.205.

76 Report A.W.M.M.S., 1865-66, p.21.

77 Meade, A Ride through New Zealand, p.211.

78 Baker to Eggleston, 18 December 1861, M.O.M.C., set 170.

chemist's shop and the generosity of his patients he could now afford to remit an occasional five pounds draft to succour his father in Manchester and his mother-in-law in Melbourne.⁷⁹ Like the more notorious missionaries in Hawaii, Baker had gone to the South Seas to do good, and had done rather well.

79 Rev. S. Rabone to Rev. Geo. Baker, 31 March 1866, M.O.M.C., set 35; Letter Book of the Rev. Stephen Rabone, M.O.M.C., set 35: Rabone to the Rev. Geo. Baker, 20 February 1866, Rabone to Mrs J.W. Powell (Prahan, Victoria), 20 February 1866.

CHAPTER 4

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TONGA DISTRICT

WHEN Baker arrived in Sydney he found that he was not unknown in Methodist circles. He had, like all other missionaries, written frequent dispatches to the Secretary of the Missionary Committee and extracts from these letters were published in the Missionary Notices, a magazine issued quarterly by the Society for publicity purposes. In the original Baker's letters were disfigured by execrable syntax and an absence of punctuation,¹ but the editor's blue pencil did wonders for them, and when published they provided an exciting contrast to the edifying but rather dull letters that most of the brethren wrote. Baker had a journalist's eye for the bizarre and the romantic; he wrote of storms, tidal waves, shipwrecks, native parliaments and weeping converts - wonderful material for a parson in need of a homily, or a Sunday school superintendent seeking a story.² In

1 Baker's letters normally consisted of one sentence several pages long, divided internally by dashes; typical examples are: Baker to Eggleston, 29 October 1860; Baker to Eggleston, 19 November 1860; Baker to Eggleston, 14 August 1860; all from M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101. By the 1870s his style had greatly improved but there was still heavy irony in his description of a colleague as 'a young man green from his market garden and without hardly any education'. (Baker to Chapman, 16 January 1876, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 15).

2 Missionary Notices, January 1863, pp.349-50; ibid., April 1866, p.552; ibid., October 1866, p.582.

Sydney the Committee decided that as Baker was only to stay a short time, it would not give him a circuit, but keep him in Sydney to lecture on the work of the missions and to take up collections.³ He was thus brought into contact with many of the most influential Methodists of the time. His audiences may have been a little disappointed at seeing him, for Baker was not very imposing, being short and stout, with fleshy features and rather close set little eyes,⁴ but his lectures must have had merit because from the collections he was able to build a new hall for Tupou College in Tonga and endow several scholarships there.⁵ Between lectures Baker walked the wards of Sydney Hospital extending his medical knowledge.⁶

3 Baker, Memoirs, p.10.

4 Three portrait photographs of Baker are known to the writer. One, the original of which is in the Premier's Office, Nuku'alofa, was reproduced in the memoir written by his daughters, Lillian and Beatrice; it was probably taken in the late 1870s. Another, taken several years later, is in the possession of Trinity College, Auckland. A third, probably taken in 1897 and reproduced as the frontispiece of this work, is in the possession of the Public Library, Auckland. In addition to these photographs there is a large bronze statue which stands over Baker's grave at Lifuka, Ha'apai. These likenesses confirm the description given above.

5 Report A.W.M.M.S., 1868-69, p.29; Moulton to Rabone, 28 January 1871, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99; the Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 14 January 1869, p.141.

6 Baker, Memoirs, p.10.

Baker spent two years in this pleasant fashion and by the middle of 1868 the Committee began to wonder if he ever intended to return to Tonga. The Rev. S. Rabone, the mission Secretary, wrote to him: 'I cannot for a moment suspect you of vacillation or of a wish to get free from your obligation...but...'.⁷ Baker wished to stay in Sydney until after the Annual Conference of January 1869, which was to elect a new chairman of the Tonga District. Fortunately Elizabeth was expecting another child, and so he was given permission to remain in Sydney until after the confinement, and hence until after the Conference.⁸ Thus when the time came for the Conference to elect a chairman for Tonga they had in their midst one of the contenders for the honour. The preferment should probably have been given to Stephinson, who had served loyally, perhaps at times even over-zealously, for twelve years in Tonga. Baker had only been six years in the islands but he had made many valuable contacts in Sydney and had all the advantages of propinquity. When the ballot slips were counted Shirley Waldemar Baker was named as the Chairman of the Friendly Islands District.⁹

By April 1869 the new baby, Laura, had been born and the Bakers embarked on the mission brig John

7 Rabone to Baker, 31 July 1868, M.O.M.C., set 35.

8 Ibid.

9 The Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 9 February 1869, p.147.

Wesley to return to Tonga. With them went the Rev. D. Wylie and the Rev. H. Greenwood, two new missionaries for the district, and a deputation of two senior missionaries on a tour of inspection, the Rev. Stephen Rabone and the Rev. James Watkin.¹⁰

It is apparent from Baker's letters that the spur which drove him on was a desire, even a need, to make his mark in the world, to be acknowledged as a success.¹¹ The unfortunate obverse of this was that he regarded any success on the part of one of his colleagues as a personal threat. Almost at once Baker was made aware of just such a danger. The deputation which had accompanied Baker to Tonga carried out their inspection, returned to Sydney and published their report. They hardly mentioned Baker and disparaged the reforms of 1862. Their praise was reserved for Tupou College, 'a positive wonder in our eyes', and for its Headmaster, the Rev. J.E. Moulton, 'a cyclopedia of accomplishments'.¹²

Moulton had left Newington College in Sydney in 1865 to take charge of the training institution, a job rejected by Baker a few years earlier. While

10 Missionary Notices, October 1869, p.5.

11 Sir Charles Mitchell came to this conclusion in 1887. He wrote: 'I think he is very ambitious and anxious to make a name for himself in the world - if only in the limited world of the South Seas.' (Mitchell to Sir Henry Holland, 6 May 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.2).

12 Missionary Notices, July and October 1869, p.148; Report A.W.M.M.S., 1869-70, p.22.

Baker was absent the College had been built, the grounds laid out, the classes formed and instruction started. By 1869 it was offering courses in Theology, English, Mathematics, Ancient and Modern History, Geography, Chemistry and Astronomy. Moulton moreover had the sort of background Baker longed for and tried to fabricate. His father was a Methodist minister and one time Chairman of the North Shields District. His wife, Emma, was the niece of Eggleston, late Secretary of the Missionary Society in Australia. One brother, William Fiddian Moulton, was a noted Greek scholar, later to be Headmaster of the Leys School, Cambridge; another, John Fletcher Moulton, became Lord Moulton of Bank, while the third, Richard Green Moulton, was to become Professor of Literature at Chicago University. Being a stammerer and an asthmatic James Egan Moulton had not been to a university, and had worked as a clerk and a chemist's assistant before entering the ministry. He was, however, a scholar in his own right, a gifted teacher, and a gentleman,¹³ although he was inclined to be pedantic and to patronise his less gifted colleagues.¹⁴ Against this Baker could oppose only a nebulous ancestry, a few Latin tags, mostly misspelt

13 J. Egan Moulton and W. Fiddian Moulton, Moulton of Tonga (London, 1921), pp.13-34.

14 The Rev. H. Greenwood, for instance, complained in 1872: 'Mr Moulton has spent hundreds of pounds on the College on the plea that permission was granted by the Deputation, and all we had to do

and used in the wrong places,¹⁵ and a gift for energetic prose, unspoil't by the niceties of formal grammar. Genteel visitors to Tonga quickly appraised the situation and affected towards Moulton respect and admiration, and towards Baker a thinly disguised scorn.¹⁶ To Baker, so sensitive of his position as the faifekau pule, or head of the church, Moulton appeared as a very dangerous rival, and towards him Baker began to manifest an animosity that was to become almost obsessive. In many ways the history

footnote 14 (continued)

was to pass the Balance Sheet when the money had been expended.... The Government was given thirty places in the College, but Mr Moulton is the only one who knows of this agreement...

[We] determined that the District Meeting should be the governing power, not the Principal of Tubou College, be he Mr Moulton or anyone else.' (Greenwood to Rabone, 10 August 1872, M.O.M.C., set 170).

- 15 E.g., Baker to Eggleston, 18 December 1861, M.O.M.C., set 170: 'a missionary's life is not a sine qui non'.
- 16 E.L. Layard, British Consul for Fiji and Tonga, visited Tonga in 1876. Of Baker he commented: 'this gentleman, from his antecedents, is not very specially qualified for enacting the part of a legislator' (Layard to Derby, 8 March 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.1); of Moulton he commented: 'I saw he was a very different man from Mr Baker. He was apparently a man of education and a gentleman. I called on him.' (Layard to Derby, 19 November 1877, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.19). Basil Thomson, the son of a bishop, described Baker as 'a plausible and not over-scrupulous man, half-educated, but possessed of considerable knowledge of the world' (The Diversions of a Prime Minister, p.367); he described Moulton as 'a gentleman and a scholar, full of generous impulses and enthusiasms' (The Diversions of a Prime Minister, p.213).

of Tonga over the succeeding twenty years was to become a running commentary on the vendetta waged between these two men of the Gospel.

For the moment, however, they were kept apart, Moulton in Nuku'alofa and Baker in Ha'apai, where his first task was to prove his worth to the Missionary Committee. If he could not give evidence of gentility or scholarship, he could at least provide money, and in 1869 the Society needed funds more urgently than ever before.

It had been the practice, ever since the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society had been inaugurated in 1855, for the parent body in Britain to subsidise the Australian Society by meeting its annual deficit, normally between £4,000 and £5,000.¹⁷ In 1869, however, the British Society declared its intention of discontinuing the practice. The Missionary Committee in Sydney reported in March 1870:

On the matter of the Annual Deficiency, Your Committee report that during the year communications have been received from the Home Committee in which it is plainly stated that, while in the past they have dealt with an ungrudging heart and hand with this Australian Society; yet that the time has come when something decisive and immediate must be done to relieve them of this

17 In 1865 the deficit was £5,972 (Report A.W.M.M.S., 1865-66, p.102); in 1866 it was £4,024 (Report A.W.M.M.S., 1875-76, p.110); in 1867 it was £4,881 (Report A.W.M.M.S., 1867-68, p.108); in 1868 it was £3,795 (Report A.W.M.M.S., 1868-69, p.106).

large yearly charge upon their inadequate resources.... By the help of God we will support our own Foreign Missions, and so relieve the Parent Society, to which we owe so much, of the few thousands of pounds paid annually to meet our deficiency.¹⁸

The British Society's request had actually been received in Australia prior to the 1869 Conference, and the matter was debated at length by that body. The Conference decided to send a deputation to investigate the management of the various mission stations and recommend means of raising their subscriptions,¹⁹ for it was plain that the mission areas would have to bear a larger proportion of their expenses. In January 1870 the Missionary Notices announced that areas already converted were expected to make an earnest effort to be self-supporting, and exhorted the missionaries 'to adopt a more systematic and efficient plan of collecting'.²⁰

Baker had been elected Chairman of the Friendly Islands District by the 1869 Conference, and had been present when the financial problems of the Society were being debated. Furthermore, he had sailed to Tonga in the company of the deputation which had been sent by the Conference to investigate the financial position of the various mission stations. No doubt both the Conference and the deputation took

18 Report A.W.M.M.S., 1869-70, p.9.

19 'Conference Notes', the Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 9 February 1869, p.146.

20 Missionary Notices, January 1870, p.178.

the opportunity to impress upon him the need to be 'systematic and efficient' in the matter of collecting contributions, and so it was to this matter that he first turned his attention in Tonga.

Contributions to the church were made twice a year in Tonga, rather than on each Sunday. At the beginning of the year membership tickets were sold at one shilling each and the proceeds of ticket sales had originally been the only source of revenue. As early as 1836, however, voluntary contributions were collected for mission funds at a special meeting known as the Missionary Meeting, or fakamisinale, held usually towards the end of the year. In 1836 the Missionary Meeting collection had been £23.3.2,²¹ but by 1866 it had totalled £3,770; it thus not only covered all local expenses, but provided a surplus of over £1,300 for mission work elsewhere.²² Baker held his first Missionary Meeting in December 1869, and the results justified the confidence which the Conference had placed in him. The contributions came to £5,450, nearly £3,000 in excess of local expenses and equalling the combined missionary collections of all the Methodists in Australia.²³

Baker achieved his results by reorganising the method of collection. In each village he made a few of the most prominent people responsible for

21 Farmer, Tonga and the Friendly Islands, p.261.

22 Report A.W.M.M.S., 1866-67, p.110.

23 Report A.W.M.M.S., 1869-70, p.118.

soliciting contributions from the other villagers. Each collector then put pressure on his family and friends to make generous contributions and thus ensure that his 'plate' was larger than that of any other 'plateholder'. The intense rivalry which this system generated, and the methods used by 'plateholders' to stimulate contributions were described by Basil Thomson. His description was based on what he saw in 1886 and 1891, but would apply equally well to 1869:

For some days previously six or seven chosen vessels had been canvassing their friends on behalf of the plates for which they were to be responsible on the great day. There was a keen rivalry between them.... The tout took care to approach his victim in the evening when the house was full of people. He would remark that Pita (a neighbour) had promised two dollars this year, and would hint that he scarcely supposed the victim will allow himself to be outdone by such a one as Pita. The unfortunate man, constrained by false shame, promises more than he can afford; the amount is noted in a book and has to be found by importunity or petty larceny.²⁴

The actual presentation of the plates was made publicly in the church on the day of the fakamisinale. Thomson again provides a description:

In front of the pulpit stood a table on which lay a common wash-hand basin and an account book. The patrons of the basins sat in a stiff row behind.

After the preliminary religious exercises the missionary announced the name of the patron in charge of the plate first to be filled.... As the name of each patron was called she rose in

24 Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, pp.185-6.

a stately manner and cast her contribution into the basin as a nest egg. And now those who had promised contributions to the plate just announced, swaggered up the aisle and flung their coins into the basin.... When the basins had drained the congregation of all their cash, the contents were quickly counted and the amount whispered to the presiding teacher. In crying aloud the contents of each basin he allowed pauses for the cheering, and artistically kept the largest until the last.²⁵

Public giving and rivalry between contributors were probably hallmarks of Missionary Meetings in Tonga before Baker's time, but for reasons of propriety earlier missionaries had kept the natural exuberance of the Tongans in check. Baker on the other hand allowed them a free rein at collection time, and under his governance the annual fakamisinale became the greatest festival in the Tongan calendar, a gala occasion marked by intense excitement and festive dress. A trader, P.S. Bloomfield, described the scene in a village on collection day to the British Consul:

The villages were generally divided into two parties called by the names of different nations such as English and German, and carried if they were procurable, the flags of the nations they were named after. Each party tried to outdo the other in the amounts they would give and in some cases one village was pitted against another. There was always a considerable amount of excitement, flags flying, kerosene tins beating for want of drums and natives on horseback rushing about with flags in their hands shouting

25 Ibid., pp.187-91.

and yelling while exhortations to give largely were being poured forth in the church.²⁶

While the organisation described above applied throughout the whole of Tonga, Baker went to even greater lengths in his own circuit, Ha'apai, to ensure that the contribution would be bountiful. In the first place he let it be known around his circuit that any village which did not contribute fifty buckets of coconut oil, or its equivalent in cash, would be deprived of the services of its native minister.²⁷ Secondly, he made an innovation which was to be very significant, for in following years it was to spread to other circuits in the group and became characteristic of Missionary Meeting collections in Tonga. Tongans manufactured coconut oil at collection time with more zeal than at any other time in the year, but many found, when the day arrived, that they had not made sufficient to provide the sum which, under the stress of the occasion, they felt impelled to give. To these people Baker was prepared to allow credit; their promises were recorded as a gift, and they could subsequently

26 Memorandum by Alfred Maudslay, dated 2 November 1878, based on information supplied by P.S. Bloomfield, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.45, enc.2.

27 One of the charges against Baker at a Special District Meeting at Ha'apai on 23 August 1870 was that he had: '...stated contrary to fact that it was the arrangement of the District Meeting that should any village where an Assistant Missionary is stationed fail to raise fifty buckets of oil, the said assistant would be removed and deposed from his work.' ('Minutes of Special District Meeting held 23 August 1870', Friendly Islands District Meeting Minute Book, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa).

make oil to cover the amount. By these means Ha'apai alone gave £2,000 at the 1869 meeting. Baker noted in the minutes of the local preachers' meeting held there in January 1870 that most of the villagers were 'considerably in arrears', but expressed his confidence that the debts would soon be made good.²⁸

Tonga's contribution was received by the Missionary Committee in Sydney with unbounded enthusiasm. In January 1870 the Missionary Notices published the full details of this 'noble sum...contributed in one year by this earnest and devoted Christian community',

28 'Minutes of the Local Preachers' Meeting held at Lifuka, Ha'apai, 12 Jan. 1870', Minutes of Local Preachers' Meetings for the Haabai Circuit 1861-1874, Papers of the Rev. E.E.V. Collocott, MSS 207, The Mitchell Library, Sydney; Baker was later to claim: '...to receive promises is part of our Church system and was done by the fathers before I was born!' (Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation appointed by the Board of Management of the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in Sydney to inquire into the Charges against Rev. S.W. Baker, held at Nukualofa, Tongatabu, 8th October 1879 [cited henceforth as Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation...October 1879]), but a careful check of missionary letters reveals no evidence of this before Baker became Chairman. The earliest mention of indebtedness for mission collections was made at the local preachers' meeting mentioned above. By 1872 the practice was evidently well established, for Moulton wrote to the Mission Secretary: 'You will no doubt have heard about the immense amount contributed, or rather promised, by the circuit.... It's too much, this killing the goose. There will be a great reaction bye and bye.' (Moulton to Rabone, 10 September 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99).

and the generosity of the Tongans was held up as an example for other Methodists to follow:

It is hoped that this instance of unparalleled liberality on the part of a people but recently in heathen darkness will not only serve to excite the thanksgiving of many, but also to stimulate those with fuller light and larger privileges, to renewed and increased exertion in efforts and gifts for the Missionary work.²⁹

Baker's efforts were also noted outside missionary circles, and did not pass uncriticised. Two Englishmen, Dr G.H. Kingsley and the Earl of Pembroke, toured Polynesia in 1871 and were very critical of missionary activities in the South Seas. They did not visit Tonga, but they received a copy of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Report for 1870, which contained details of the Tongan contribution in 1869.³⁰ On the basis of these figures the 'Earl and the Doctor' published a bitter denunciation of Wesleyan missionaries in general and the Tongan brethren in particular:

Whatever good the Wesleyans may do 'spiritually', the mischief they work 'commercially', wherever they have a chance, is beyond counting, and the common name of their missionary schooner, 'The Palm Oil Trader' is, according to their own account, well deserved. If the Wesleyan Society had not published the facts themselves I should have hesitated to state them. Can it be believed that out of the kindly credulous Tonga Islanders, just struggling into civilization, and whose every dollar, hardly earned, should

29 Missionary Notices, January 1870, p.178.

30 The Earl and the Doctor [the Earl of Pembroke and Dr G.H. Kingsley], South Sea Bubbles (Melbourne, 1872), p.252.

and would be spent on the improvement of their country were it not for these canting sharks, they get 'the noble and astonishing sum of £4,489.16.2...to assist in sending the glorious Gospel of Christ to the regions beyond'. Beyond where? To those who know the generous excitable nature of South Sea islanders, this must be looked upon as sheer pillage.³¹

Most chroniclers have tended to agree with the Earl and the Doctor, but it is necessary to say in Baker's defence that he was not responsible for the policy. He merely improved the techniques of collecting while leaving the theological implications to his superiors, who justified the somewhat shabby means by the end. The Committee, or at least its Secretary, Rev. S. Rabone, was well aware of the methods used to raise the collections, for Baker discussed them quite openly in his letters. Baker could also argue, as he did later, that the coconuts were just lying on the ground. All he did was to get the Tongans to collect the nuts which would otherwise rot, and press out the oil for the mission.³² In return for this hardly onerous labour the people not only benefitted

31 Ibid., pp.251-2.

32 Baker to Chapman, 15 March 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101: 'I merely repeat a statement given me by Mr. Trodd, that before I came here the total amount of copra received here was not 90 tons - now it is almost 2,000 tons - so don't let anyone charge me with impoverishing the natives. I only get them to collect the nuts which otherwise would rot.'

themselves in the form of schools and churches, but assisted in bringing similar benefits to their less fortunate fellows in heathen lands. With respect to his accepting promises, it is perhaps necessary to mention that most churches in Australia to-day use almost identical methods of fund raising.

Whatever the ethical justification of his methods, Baker had succeeded in proving his ability as an administrator. As an evangelist he also enjoyed success: in June 1870 Ha'apai was gripped by one of those periodic revivals which were characteristic of Tongan Methodism and Baker could report that more than a thousand new members had joined the church.³³ In his relations with his missionary colleagues, however, Baker was not so successful. He had antagonised Wylie, his assistant at Ha'apai, in some way and relations between the two were becoming increasingly strained.³⁴ Stephinson had every reason to feel bitter at the preferment of his junior, and although Baker had left him in charge of Nuku'alofa, the most important

33 Missionary Notices, October 1870, p.209, letter from Baker dated 30 June 1870.

34 During the subsequent trial of Baker before a Special District Meeting, Wylie was asked why he did not complain to Baker about certain abuses. He replied: 'Did not tell Mr Baker because he has thought for some time that Mr Baker not felt disposed to receive any information from him' ('Minutes of Special District Meeting held 23 August 1870', Friendly Islands District Meeting Book, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa).

circuit, he was not mollified. Affairs came to a head in August 1870, when Stephinsson and Wylie sponsored a Special District Meeting to charge Baker with improper conduct towards some of the female members of his congregation.³⁵

Charges of this sort were not unknown in Tonga, for temptations of the flesh were something of an occupational hazard for missionaries. One of the reasons for the failure of L.M.S. missions in Tonga at the end of the eighteenth century was the desertion of Vason, one of the brethren, when he was called to choose between his faith and a heathen siren;³⁶ the Rev. James Watkin had been recalled from Tonga in 1837 under a similar cloud.³⁷ The source of the trouble lay in the attitude of Tongan girls to sexual adventuring, an attitude summed up by Lobase when she explained her indiscretions to Basil Thomson: 'She was born into the world, she said, to enjoy herself, and as the capacity for enjoyment wanes when one is old and ugly, pleasures

35 'Minutes of a Special District Meeting held 23 August 1870', Friendly Islands District Meeting Book, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

36 Vason, An Authentic Narrative, p.108; 'Tongataboo in the Friendly Islands, Journal of the Missionaries 1797-1800', Missionary Transactions, vol.1, p.257.

37 W.N. Gunson, Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas 1797 to 1860 (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University), p.302.

must all be crowded into the fleeting hours of youth'.³⁸ The missionaries opposed this philosophy with all the force of civil and ecclesiastical authority, but some, inevitably, fell by the wayside themselves. Whether Baker was one of these will never be known for certain, but the District Meeting charged him with indecent behaviour towards:

1. Elizabeth Kaufo'ou, a young woman of between twenty and thirty, pushing her down nearly flat in the boat, preventing her rising when she made an effort to do so, drawing her hair through your fingers and tickling her neck, it being nearly dark at the time.
2. Also chasing her with a stick on another occasion on the green.
3. Examining the private parts of a young married woman between 9 and 10 p.m. in a small room, no third person being present. Also acting unbecomingly to the same person on another occasion, to the great indignation of her husband.
4. Pulling the breasts of sundry women, and pricking with a pin the hinder parts of another.
5. Chasing sundry girls around the mission premises and poking them in their sides.
6. Poking and pinching the private parts of a man named Samuela Nauha'amea.³⁹

Had these charges been proved Baker's

38 Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, p.147.

39 'Minutes of Special District Meeting held at Lifuka, Ha'apai 23 August 1870', Friendly Islands District Meeting Minute Book, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

missionary career would have been over, but he managed the affair very skilfully. He insisted, as the Chairman, on presiding over his own trial, then from the chair disqualified Wylie and Stephinson from voting on the grounds that they were witnesses for the prosecution. The Tongan witnesses, on whom the prosecution relied, proved very perverse, probably from fear of incriminating themselves. As a result Baker was exonerated, though Moulton struck a discordant note by voting 'guilty' on two of the charges.⁴⁰ In December Baker counter-attacked by charging Wylie and Stephinson with issuing malicious libels against his moral and religious character and haled them to Hobart for the General Conference to examine the matter.⁴¹ The Conference could only be guided by the decision of the brethren in Tonga, and Baker sailed back to the islands with his name cleared. Stephinson was given permission to retire from mission work and remained in New South Wales, while Wylie was sent to Fiji.⁴²

40 Ibid.

41 'Minutes of Annual District Meeting, 6 December 1870', Friendly Islands District Meetings Minute Book, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

42 The matter was debated at a special closed session of the Missionary Committee on 27 January 1871. The deliberations were not published, but in the 1871 stations Wylie was appointed to Rewa, Fiji, and Stephinson was allowed to retire from mission work: the Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 1 March 1871.

The true facts of the case are no easier to discern now than they were in 1870, though Baker's nickname among the Tongans, Motu'a Mohetō (which means 'an old man who creeps into a woman's hut and commits offences against her while she is asleep') lends some substance to the charges.⁴³ On the other hand Wylie and Stephinson bore grudges against Baker and were obviously motivated by a desire to have him removed. Wylie, interestingly enough, left Fiji rather hurriedly a few years later, leaving behind some ugly rumours and a pregnant housemaid.⁴⁴

Back in Tonga Baker took over the Nuku'alofa circuit vacated by Stephinson and occupied the mission house, next door to the Moultons. Relations between the two began very well, for a few weeks after the Bakers arrived Moulton's young son almost

43 During the trial of Robert Hanslip on an allegation that he was an accessory to an attempt on Baker's life in 1887, Hanslip said in evidence: 'Tavake came to me the night before the attack on Mr Baker. He told me the runaway prisoners had come down to shoot motua moheho; this means "an old man that gropes with women when they are asleep". I understood that Mr Baker was meant.' ('Minutes of evidence in the case Regina V. Hanslip, 11 April 1887', F.O.C.P. 5611, no.30, enc.5); according to the Sydney Evening News, 18 April 1887, 'This mention of Baker's well known nickname caused much amusement among the Tongans'.

44 Langham to Chapman, 3 February 1879, Letter Book of Rev. F. Langham, Dixon Library, Sydney.

succumbed to an attack of quinsey and Baker was able to earn Moulton's gratitude by tending the child back to health. Moulton reported that his neighbour visited the child six times a day and painted the swollen tissues with caustic.⁴⁵ All might have been well had Moulton been willing to allow Baker some authority in the affairs of the College; but here Moulton insisted on complete independence. The deputation which visited Tonga in 1869 had agreed on the need for certain improvements to the College and on the strength of this Moulton spent some hundreds of pounds, merely presenting the bills to the District Meeting without seeking its sanction or approval. He chose the students personally, and on his own account negotiated with the Government to allot thirty places in the College to students who, on completion of their courses, would fill government positions, completely ignoring the arguments of the other missionaries that the College was intended to train young men as assistant missionaries or as teachers in mission schools.⁴⁶ Every Sunday the college students went to church at Zion, which was under Baker's charge, and Baker had occasion to complain to Moulton that they were ogling the girls and taking rather more than their share of the

45 Moulton to Rabone, 28 June 1871, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 8.

46 Greenwood to Rabone, 10 August 1872, M.O.M.C., set 170.

extempore prayers.⁴⁷ Moulton replied by conducting his own services on the college premises close by, which gave the boys the opportunity to sing very loudly, to the discomfiture of their less vociferous rivals up on the hill. Finally it came out in a Tongan law court that although the sixth commandment was preached at the College it was flagrantly not being practised there, and Baker decided to intervene.⁴⁸ At the District Meeting held in December 1871 Baker proposed 'a set of laws' giving the District Meeting, through its agent, the Chairman, supervisory powers over the expenditure and discipline of the College, and it is perhaps indicative of the extent to which Moulton had alienated the sympathies of the brethren that the motion was passed.⁴⁹ Moulton resigned and refused to withdraw his resignation unless the motion were rescinded, or the College moved to Pangaimotu, an island off the coast of Tongatapu. Realising the trouble that would follow Moulton's resignation, the brethren agreed to move the College.⁵⁰ Moulton, however, was in the habit

47 Moulton to Rabone, 21 May 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.

48 Greenwood to Rabone, 10 August 1872, M.O.M.C., set 170.

49 Details of the proceedings are given in: Baker to Rabone, 27 December 1871, MSS and Printed Documents in Connection with the Charges against Rev. S.W. Baker, Tonga, 1866 and Onward, Turnbull Library, Wellington [cited henceforth as MSS and Printed Documents re Baker].

50 Ibid.

of discussing the doings of the District Meetings with his senior students, a practice Baker called 'tittle-tattling', and news of the proposed removal soon reached Tupou.⁵¹ Thus the ship that carried the District Meeting minutes to the Conference also carried a letter from the King and the National Assembly of Chiefs seeking a guarantee that the College would not be moved.⁵² Faced with this the Conference rejected the District Meeting's proposals, ordered that the College remain in Nuku'alofa and administered a stern reproof to Baker.⁵³ The first round had gone to Moulton, but daggers were drawn.

-
- 51 Baker to Chapman, 12 February 1877, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2: 'Although there were disturbances in the district before he [Moulton] came into the district...it was confined to the missionaries and the natives new [sic] nothing about it...but since Mr Moulton's advent and his making friends and confidants of his lads, everything is known from land's end to land's end.... It is Mr Moulton and his system of tittle-tattling and back-biting which has been introduced by the College and is still carried on'.
- 52 'Natives and Chiefs in the Wesleyan Church in Tonga to the Wesleyan Ministers in their Great Assembly, 26 December 1871', MSS and Printed Documents re Baker.
- 53 The actual letter from Rabone to Baker has not survived, but its contents can be inferred from Baker's reply: 'I feel tempted to resign.... You say you hope that God in His mercy will defend the College and make it a great blessing - I can only say Amen. I have done more for the College than any other man...yet the Committee and Conference are not satisfied.' (Baker to Rabone, 5 July 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101).

Baker had been very restrained in the past when referring to his colleague, but after his rebuff he grew virulent. He described the College as a 'nuisance...a hindrance to our work...only causing unpleasantness', and claimed that Moulton's reports were 'giving a false impression to the world as things taught and accomplished in the College when only some four or five are learning and even those not able to do anything'.⁵⁴ Baker made similar statements to his congregation, for Moulton complained to Sydney: 'Mr Baker is said to have stated at a Katoaga [festival] that the children were more boto [wise] before he went up to the colonies than they are now. How he can make such a statement I don't know'.⁵⁵ But Baker's attacks were ineffectual at this stage; the reputation of Tupou College did not depend on his testimonial.

Moulton replied by criticising Baker's methods of collecting funds, for though he was very willing to spend mission funds he had a fastidious aversion for collecting them. As early as 1867, when the Missionary Meetings collected only £2,000 and before Baker revolutionised fund raising, Moulton was murmuring at the amounts raised. 'In some places', he warned, 'it averaged 2/- and in others 3/- and 3/6 per member, and this from those who do

54 Ibid.

55 Moulton to Rabone, 19 July 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.

not handle four dollars in hard money from January to December'.⁵⁶ When Baker reorganised the collections Moulton had much more cause for alarm, for it began to appear that the size of his contribution was the measure of a man's faith. The prestige conscious Tongan families came to look upon the size of their 'plate' as a status symbol and used all the resources of family obligation and Tongan custom to surpass their rivals. The Godeffroy firm, which had begun operations in Tonga about 1867, gave unwitting assistance by importing quantities of Chilean and Peruvian coin,⁵⁷ for it was much more satisfactory for a Tongan 'plate holder' to cast silver dollars into the mission basin, than merely to have a quantity of oil recorded. The presence of cash also made possible a new and exciting form of collection known as sivi (sifting), wherein contributors marched around the tub putting coins in singly until all but one contestant had been eliminated. The winner then cast in his

56 Missionary Notices, July 1867, p.29, letter from Moulton dated 29 March 1867.

57 It is not clear when Godeffroys first introduced the Chilean silver into Tonga. The earliest mention of 'dollars' as currency rather than 'pounds' occurs in: Moulton to Rabone, 10 September 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99, though this may refer to United States dollars. Baker's reference in 1874 to 'the rubbish of silver we have here' (Baker to Chapman, 27 February 1874, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101) could only refer to the Chilean silver; thus by 1874 the coins were evidently well established in Tonga.

remaining coins, winning applause and admiration from the spectators.⁵⁸ At one sivi it is recorded that an excited contestant tore off his coat and offered it rather than be eliminated.⁵⁹

To meet the demand for cash at the Missionary Meetings Baker developed the system of accepting promises one step further, by actually lending cash from mission funds to the value of the oil or copra promised. Thus in 1871 Baker reported that he had had to advance £70 to Watkin. 'I did so', he stated, 'because he had advanced that amount of money to the natives for Missionary Meetings and there has not been time enough to get it in'.⁶⁰ In December 1873 he ordered some timber from Sydney, but sent a district order, rather than cash, explaining 'I want the cash to be able to

58 Tannuobaaga (Tangata'opangai?), who took part in a sivi at Kolovai described it as follows: 'I took part in the missionary collections. I put in money. We had some soldiers - I was the commander of the soldiers, I think about 24 or 25. I led the way and threw in one shilling, and the others did the same. We subscribed ten dollars each, but put it in one shilling at a time.' (Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation... October 1879, pp.17, 18).

59 Affidavit of Phillip Payne, sworn 22 November 1878, concerning the Missionary Meeting at Mu'a in 1875, Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation... October 1879, p.21.

60 Baker to Rabone, 27 December 1871, MSS and Printed Documents re Baker.

use it at our Missionary Meetings'.⁶¹ The results of these arrangements were gratifying. In 1870 the mission collected £3,200, in 1871 £4,500 and in 1872 nearly £7,000.⁶²

The only place which did not join in the spirit of the Missionary Meetings was Tupou College. Baker reported after the 1871 collection: 'The College [contribution] last year was £58 - this year £32 and not because they had not the money but because they were told in other words not to give it'.⁶³ After the clash with Baker in December 1871 Moulton began openly criticising the collections. After the 1872 meeting he commented 'Its a great mercy the Earl and the Doctor did not come to Tonga or they would have made statements more astounding than they did'.⁶⁴

Perhaps more influential, and certainly more vociferous, were the European traders in Tonga whose profits had been damaged by Baker's collections system. The number of traders in Tonga had grown rapidly since the reforms of 1862. At first they had relied on buying Tongan oil at tax collection

61 Baker to Chapman, 31 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

62 Report A.W.M.M.S., 1870-71, p.104; Report A.W.M.M.S., 1871-72, p.106; Report A.W.M.M.S., 1872-73, p.68.

63 Baker to Rabone, 27 December 1871, MSS and Printed Documents re Baker.

64 Moulton to Rabone, 10 September 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.

time, but the growing importance of the Missionary Meetings had given them another guaranteed source of income, for at this time Tongans made oil with a will and sold it to the traders. About 1869 the Godeffroy firm began operations in Tonga and introduced the system of buying copra rather than oil.⁶⁵ Copra required less effort to make so the people welcomed the change, and as Godeffroys controlled the market outlets for this new product they acquired a virtual monopoly over Tongan copra. The local traders were thus forced to accept the position of agents for the German firm, receiving a commission on the amount of copra collected.⁶⁶ As long as the copra passed through their hands, however, they were reasonably content.

Baker's system of accepting promises disturbed this arrangement, for promises were redeemed in copra paid directly to the mission, Baker in turn passing the copra to Godeffroys.⁶⁷

65 In 1871 Baker reported: 'The traders...would not buy oil at all' (Baker to Rabone, 27 December 1871, MSS Printed Documents re Baker).

66 In 1872 Greenwood commented: 'Weber [Godeffroys manager] holds every one of the traders in Vavau between his finger and thumb' (Greenwood to Rabone, 21 August 1872, M.O.M.C., set 170).

67 Baker to Rabone, 16 September 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101: 'The promises of mataka or copra have been very large.... I have tried to make arrangements with Mr Weber to take it.'; Baker to Chapman, 3 January 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101: 'Mr Weber...has promised to take off all the copra at the Niua's at the beginning of May next'.

This system suited the mission admirably as their vessel, the John Wesley, could not have handled a fraction of the Tongan copra, and it pleased Godeffroys because it guaranteed large quantities of commission-free produce. To the traders, however, it was an attack on their livelihood and was bitterly resented. Matters were made worse in 1872 when Godeffroys reduced the price of copra from twelve to fourteen pounds per shilling to sixteen pounds per shilling, a drop of nearly 25 per cent. At that price the Tongans refused to sell copra to the traders at all. Rather than have no money at the collections the mission bought the copra at the old price and sold it to Godeffroys at the lower price.⁶⁸ This did not hurt the mission, as the money they had given for the copra was refunded immediately at the Missionary Meeting, but it was ruinous to the traders. Greenwood reported: 'they are embittered towards us, call us traders, say we are endeavouring to injure them etc. etc.'⁶⁹ Naturally Baker was the main target for their spleen, and venomous stories about his relationship with Godeffroys began to circulate on the beach.

Even more disturbing for Baker was the decline of his popularity in Sydney. The report of the Earl and the Doctor, describing him as a

68 Greenwood to Rabone, 5 July 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

69 Ibid.

'canting shark', was published in 1872, and judging from the many references to it in missionary letters it must have caused a good deal of soul searching on the part of the missionary fathers and, following as it did the investigations of 1870 and the College controversy of 1871, it began to shake the faith which the Committee had had in the Friendly Islands Chairman. Baker's enemies took advantage of his discomfiture, and by July 1872 Baker was complaining: 'I hear Mr Stephinon has been informing Mr Curwood [the Editor of the Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record] of I don't know what - that Mr Curwood is reporting this and that and the other'.⁷⁰ It seems their stories were believed. Baker complained:

the work was never in a better state, never had more members, more L.P. [local preachers] and never before raised one third of the amount - we pay all expenses, ask no one for a farthing and yet the Committee and Conference are not satisfied - just because some of the brethren are jealous of our success and a few mean low-lived folk presume to throw dirt at us...it is too hard after one works so hard to get no thanks.⁷¹

By 1872 even the Tongans were turning against him. Wylie had been writing to his old congregation in Ha'apai trying to influence them against Baker,⁷² and no doubt the traders did what

70 Baker to Rabone, 5 July 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

71 Ibid.

72 Baker to Rabone, 18 July 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

they could to fan discontent. The chiefs had a long standing grudge against him for his part in the 1862 reforms and, seeing his troubles, they began opposing him more openly.⁷³ In 1871 they decided to enforce, immediately before the Missionary Meeting, a recommendation of Tupou's that the people should wear European clothes. The people were thus forced to spend their collections on clothing, and the meetings would have been ruined but for the system of promises.⁷⁴ Then in 1872 Unga, the King's son, returned from a trip to Sydney, and told everybody that in Australia it was the laymen, and not the ministers, who ruled the church.⁷⁵ His audiences were undoubtedly very interested, and when, soon

- 73 The Chief Justice even suggested that all the missionaries except Moulton should leave Tonga; Baker to Rabone, 16 September 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.
- 74 Baker to Rabone, 27 December 1871, MSS Printed Documents re Baker: 'The petty chiefs are dead set against the Missy. Mtgs., and thus made use of a tuutuuni [order] of the Kings to Kofu fakapapalangi [dress European-fashion] that ruined sadly our Meetings'. Despite this obstacle, however, the contributions amounted to £4,500; though, as Moulton pointed out contributions by this time were mostly 'promises': Moulton to Rabone, 10 September 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.
- 75 Baker to Rabone, 16 September 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101: '[Unga's visit to Sydney]...has done him more harm than good - he has come back determined to oppose the lotu in everything - and says the Kau Fakatau [traders = laymen] buli [rule] the Church in Sydney, not the Kau Faifekau [missionaries, ministers]'.

afterwards, Minns began suggesting to his congregations in Vava'u that Tongans should have more control over their own church, his suggestions found willing ears.⁷⁶ Even the King was turning from his old friend and adviser, as his support for Moulton over the College issue indicated. Baker made a bid to enlist his support in 1871 by beautifying Zion, refurnishing it, shingling the roof and building a spire, with clock and bell, but even this attempt to mollify Tupou was frustrated by the Committee, which decided that the project was an unnecessary extravagance and insisted that Baker collect extra money for the improvements locally.⁷⁷ The parsimony of the Committee irked the King, who doubtless felt that with all the money being made out of Tonga, it could afford to be generous, and he began to look thoughtfully at the cargoes of Tongan silver slipping over the horizon in the John Wesley.

Baker, according to his lights, had been a faithful missionary, serving the Committee ably and zealously; indeed in most cases it was his excessive zeal on behalf of the Committee that had aroused opposition against him. But by late 1872 he was becoming disillusioned. In a letter to Rabone in July he wrote:

76 Below, p.105.

77 Baker to Rabone, 29 October 1871, MSS and Printed Documents re Baker.

...all I can say is - I have always brought more grist to the mill than I have taken from it - I have done my duty to the Committee and to Methodism - and if anything I have done too much.⁷⁸

He began looking for a patron less fickle and more appreciative than the Missionary Committee had proved to be. The obvious choice was Tupou.

78 Baker to Rabone, 18 July 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

CHAPTER 5

KOE SIASI TAU'ATAINA

(The Independent Church)

SOME time between September and December 1872 Baker made the decision to link his fortunes to those of Tonga and its ageing King. It was a decision which was to alter his life profoundly, to lead him into conflict with his church and his country and eventually to bring him into disgrace. It was also a decision which was to have a great influence on the course of Tongan history.

Many people, faced with Baker's problems in 1872, would have simply retired to Australia. In July of that year, indeed, Baker considered doing this, and wrote to the Missionary Secretary: 'I sometimes feel tempted to resign and bring those gentlemen [his critics] to their senses'.¹ He was thirty-six years of age and by this time had six children.² He had spent nine years in the

1 Baker to Rabone, 5 July 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

2 Alice Elizabeth, born on 24 September 1860; Shirley E. Wesley, born in March 1862; J. Beatrice P., born probably in 1865; Annie Laurie P., born probably in 1869; Ella Edith Grey, born probably in 1870; Arthur Ernest W., born probably in 1872. Baker's seventh child, Albert Henry, was born on 21 October 1873 and died a few hours after birth. He was to have two other children: Lottie Adelia M., born between 1873 and 1875, and Frank V.F., born on 2 May 1877.

islands and had a fine record of achievement, for under his administration Tonga had become the most prosperous mission in the Pacific and its annual contribution to mission funds was supporting the spread of the Gospel to other areas.³ No doubt he could command a pleasant circuit in Sydney and probably become a member of the Missionary Committee if he retired from Tonga. In Tonga, on the other hand, his future seemed unhappy. The chiefs opposed him, the King was becoming antipathetic, and the Europeans looked on him with bitterness; he was criticised in print, a source of annoyance to the Missionary Committee, and the centre of unseemly wrangles with his missionary brethren.

To resign, however, would be to admit failure, and Baker's eagerness to be acknowledged as a success was intense. When the mission brig Ella, commissioned by Baker for Tonga in 1873, was found unseaworthy and had to be sold at a great loss, Baker wrote: 'Oh I hate failures another Ella would half kill me'.⁴

3 In 1872 Tonga sent £6,687 to Sydney for foreign missions. Local expenses in Tonga were only £2,964, so a handsome surplus remained for use in other mission areas. In the same year Fiji gave £1,700: Report A.W.M.M.S., 1872-73, p.68.

4 Baker to Chapman, 1873, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2; for further details of the 'Ella' affair see: Baker to Chapman, 12 May 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101; Baker to Chapman, 20 November 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101; Baker to Chapman, 16 October 1873, MSS and Printed Documents re Baker.

His resignation, moreover, would mean victory for Moulton, a humiliation Baker could not accept. Baker's letters to the Missionary Committee give frequent evidence of his jealousy of, and animosity towards, Moulton. Moulton wanted to be 'top sawyer';⁵ he was a 'spoilt child';⁶ he had 'privileges no other Wesleyan Minister has throughout the world';⁷ he would never rest until Baker was out of the district;⁸ and he opposed Baker because he was 'in the way of his making a name for himself'.⁹ Baker had worked very hard to bring prosperity to the Tongan mission¹⁰ and he meant to keep the credit for it. To hand over the fruits of his labour to his rival

5 Baker to Rabone, 5 July 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

6 Baker to Rabone, 18 July 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

7 Ibid.

8 Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

9 Baker to Chapman, 23 June 1876, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.

10 Baker was evidently very industrious. Thomas Trood, the Godeffroy factor at Nuku'alofa, later wrote of him: 'He was a worker in the hive of men and no drone, rising long before daylight and continuing work in his study... till the middle of the night.' (Island Reminiscences (Sydney, 1912), p.74). In one of his own letters Baker remarked: 'I have often been in my buggy before 4 O'clock A.M....for the last month I have had my breakfast by lamplight.' (Baker to Chapman, 26 June 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101).

and personal enemy was unthinkable.

His reluctance to leave was reinforced by a very practical consideration: he was making a lot of money in Tonga. He frequently denied that he made any profit from treating his patients,¹¹ but this denial must be regarded with deep suspicion; the source of his new found means was most probably his medical practice.¹² By the early seventies Baker was able to lend money to the Government to establish a sugar plantation, and the size of the loan can be gauged by his claim that he lost over £200 when the venture failed, even after receiving compensation.¹³ In March 1875, because the Missionary Meeting had not been held, he sent £630 of his own money to Sydney, explaining that he had no other use for it.¹⁴ Sums like these could hardly be saved from his missionary stipend

11 Baker to Chapman, 26 June 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101; Baker to Chapman, 13 November 1876, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 15.

12 Once Baker had accumulated a little capital he re-invested it as outlined below, pp.147-8. But the fees he received from his patients almost certainly provided his original fund of capital. The alternative suggestion, that a commission from Godeffroys supplemented his income and provided his initial capital, is discussed below, pp.183-4.

13 Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

14 Baker to Chapman, 17 March 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

of £150 per annum;¹⁵ nor could he expect to find them in a suburban circuit in Australia.

The way out of Baker's dilemma was shown by Minns in Vava'u. In July 1872, Baker refused to promote Minns to Superintendent in Neiafu, explaining to his superiors: 'for the sake of getting a little popularity he is willing to sell Church, Methodism and all'.¹⁶ In September he wrote:

We are likely to have trouble in Vavau - Unga has thrown over the lotu - I wonder where the lotu would be, or what would be done if the young men fresh from the Colonies had their way - as many innovations as they like but no innovations in the laws of the Church.¹⁷

Unfortunately the reports to which these comments refer are lost, but from their context the inference would seem to be that Minns was advocating that chiefs (like Unga) should have some voice in the affairs of the Tonga mission. While Baker resented Minns making such a suggestion, the idea itself

15 A missionary's stipend was £150 p.a. in 1873 (the Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 6 February 1873); Baker received £180 p.a. in 1879, the difference being probably an allowance for the office of Chairman. With children's allowances and education allowances his total earnings from the Missionary Society were £324.2.0 in 1879 (Wesleyan Missionary Committee in Account with the Rev. S. Baker, 1 April 1880, MSS and Printed Documents re Baker).

16 Baker to Rabone, 5 July 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

17 Baker to Rabone, 16 September 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

had appeal for him, and he quickly appropriated it as his own. In September he wrote:

I believe ere long it will be expedient to take the chiefs more into our advice and confidence than we do now - such a thing must come or else we shall ever be looked upon as foreigners.... I know many pooh-pooch it, but I for one would not object to sit in a Financial District Meeting or Committee with King George.¹⁸

From advocating that the Tongans should have some voice in mission decisions to proposing that the mission should become a church, independent of foreign control, was a rather long step, but between September and December 1872 Baker made that step. His decision was soundly based on self-interest. He needed support and the proposal for independence would win him that of the King and chiefs, who were dissatisfied over the organisation of the mission, especially over the export of cash, but feared to touch the lotu. Religion was woven into Tongan life and culture, it was intimately connected with the State, and it provided the key to the civilization that the Tongans sought. An independent church however would allow the Tongans to keep the lotu, and also keep control over their contributions. It combined with this a subtle flattery to the Tongan dignity and a recognition of the Tongans' strong desire for independence in spiritual as well as temporal matters. It was

18 Ibid.

an ideal compromise, and when it was understood it was enthusiastically supported by the King and chiefs. In January 1873 Tupou once again offered the post of Premier to Baker¹⁹ but, mindful of his position as a missionary, he declined the proffered honour.

An independent church had other attractions for Baker. Tongan native ministers would assume equal rank with, and gradually replace, white missionaries; and Baker could more easily control tractable Tongans than his fractious European colleagues. The Missionary Committee would lose its control over Tongan affairs, Baker would be free from its criticism and parsimony, and at the same time, through local control of finances, those critics who commented on the anomaly of money being raised in Tonga to convert the heathen in Australia would be silenced.²⁰

The only real disadvantage in Baker's proposal was that it assumed the equality of Tongans and Europeans, and from perusing Baker's letters one gets a distinct impression that he had no such opinion; in fact 'silly' was the

19 Baker to Chapman, 9 June 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

20 H.M.S. Challenger visited Tonga in 1873 and one of its officers wrote: 'The Wesleyan Mission from this small island alone [Tongatapu] sent home £2,000 last year; let us hope it goes to convert the heathen there.' (Lord George Campbell, Log Letters from the 'Challenger' (London, 1876), p.120.

adjective he commonly used to describe his flock.²¹ Nevertheless Baker did begin to advocate equality of the races, though whether this was humbug or a sincere conversion is doubtful. It is certain, however, that this proposition did much to convince Tongans of their own worth and dignity. It also gave Baker a cause to fight for, and a moral armour that enabled him to meet the great on terms of equality. He became a Moses leading his people to the promised land, and able to shake his staff at Pharoah.

The first the missionaries heard of Baker's proposals was when he read the text of a request to Conference that the Tongan Church be granted independence, at a Missionary Meeting towards the end of 1872. Thomas, Rabone, Greenwood and Moulton were present but were given no opportunity to discuss the proposal.²² Baker again read the request at a local preachers' meeting, but as the meeting was composed mainly of Tongans, the missionaries did not object.²³ Before the District

21 Rev. James Thomas, writing to defend himself against charges by Baker, claimed that Baker's supposed love of the Tongans was complete humbug, and that in reality he regarded them as 'a lot of children': 'My Reply to Rev. S.W. Bakers Charge against me', n.d., Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 14.

22 Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

23 Ibid.

Meeting, the proper forum for discussion of such matters, was held, Baker sailed for Sydney, where he appeared at the Conference and presented a request claiming to come from the 'agents' in the Friendly Islands that 'Tonga be no longer regarded as a mission'.²⁴ The request took the Conference completely by surprise. The Advocate commented editorially: 'Hitherto the native convert has been treated as a good baby; the baby must grow to manhood...no-one dared confirm this before as no-one had so considered the franchise'.²⁵

Nevertheless the Conference agreed with the Advocate that: 'if graduates in the native institutions can do Algebra and Mensuration, they ought to be able to manage circuit accounts',²⁶ and recommended the proposal to the Missionary Committee. The Committee, however, refused to sacrifice its main means of support so easily and opposed the proposal.²⁷ The most it would allow was that for a trial period a Home Mission fund be established in Tonga with authority to retain half of the juvenile collections and a quarter of the adult collections for local use, the balance

24 The Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 6 February 1873.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Moulton to Chapman, 2 June 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.

to be sent to Australia.²⁸

Baker returned to Tonga in April 1873 to find that Moulton had been expressing disapproval of Baker's request and 'was, in consequence, out of favour with the King - a state of affairs which he reported with a certain malicious satisfaction. He could also report that the King was 'very pleased' with the remarks made at the Conference.²⁹ Baker's own position was greatly strengthened and he might have been satisfied with his limited success if the other missionaries had not thrown themselves into the arena against him. Moulton wrote to the Secretary of the Committee making it plain that the proposals had not come from the 'agents' in Tonga but from Baker alone.³⁰ He also wrote to the Advocate publishing his views:

The question is not the desirability of such a step nor its advisability at the present time but whether a measure more nearly effecting the missionaries than either King or people should be carried into effect before those missionaries have expressed their opinion upon it according to the Wesleyan system, in District Meeting assembled.³¹

-
- 28 King of Tonga to the Church in Sydney, 24 March 1874, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.11.
- 29 Baker to Chapman, 12 May 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.
- 30 Moulton to Chapman, 2 June 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.
- 31 The Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 1 August 1873.

Greenwood, hitherto one of Baker's most reliable deputies, wrote a long memorandum pointing out the difficulties involved in raising native ministers to equal status with Europeans. 'These people are but children', he argued, and handing the church to them would be to make it the tool of the chiefs, for no native minister could align himself against his chief. Only Europeans who were not part of the Tongan social system could keep the chiefs in check. He concluded:

A great political change will have to take place before the native ministers have that position and influence in the land sufficient to their being left in charge of the Church in Tonga.³²

The District Meeting convened in December 1873 to discuss the issue and the debate was bitter. Baker wrote shortly afterwards: 'My life at present is a perfect misery...all I get from my brethren is persecution'.³³ The meeting would not endorse Baker's proposal for independence, but it recognised the value of local control of finances. After meeting local expenses Tonga had still been able to send £4,159 to Sydney in 1873.³⁴ From the Home Mission Fund money had been provided

32 Rev. H. Greenwood, 'Memorandum', n.d., Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 16.

33 Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

34 Report A.W.M.M.S., 1873-74, p.60.

to build four mission houses, and this, to missionaries who had previously lived under thatch, was probably a persuasive argument.³⁵ Moreover, Tongan feeling was obviously strongly in favour of the money being used locally, for in Ha'apai all contributions had been made by the children to ensure that half, rather than a quarter, of the collections would be kept in Tonga.³⁶ The meeting therefore decided to recommend that Tonga be permitted to manage its own finances and Watkin was sent to the 1874 Conference to present the case.

At the Conference there was considerable opposition to this proposal, instigated mainly by Stephinson, and eventually a decision was reached to send Chapman, the Secretary for Missions, to Tonga to investigate the whole matter and report to the following Conference.³⁷ It seemed that the initiative had been taken from Baker and that the future of the Tongan mission would be decided between the District Meeting and the Conference.

35 Weatherboard houses were built at Mu'a, Hihifo, Tongu'a and 'Utulau; a new study was built for the house at Nuku'alofa, and the mission house at Ha'apai was furnished: Baker to Chapman, 31 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

36 Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

37 The Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 3 March 1874.

Baker, however, did not give in so easily. In February 1874 the chiefs wrote to the King expressing their wish for the mission in Tonga 'to be like the Wesleyan Church in Sydney'. Baker discussed the chiefs' request with the King and suggested that the King and chiefs should write a joint letter to the Conference submitting their views.³⁸ The King and chiefs met in March and drew up their demands:

This meeting affirms that the time has arrived to fulfill the promise made by the missionaries, and the church appoint trustees and all matters affecting the church be with them to arrange and superintend. With regard to the money raised this meeting justifies the complaining of the people owing to the very large amount of money which is sent from the country...this meeting earnestly desires that the Committee and Conference...allow the Church of Tonga to become free such as becomes a people who know the Gospel...as it is at present it appears that the possession of Tonga has become the property of another.³⁹

While these were legitimate Tongan aspirations, there is good reason to suspect that Baker played a larger part in drafting the letter than he admitted. In the first place the letter consisted of a set of peremptory demands backed by thinly veiled threats, and this was not the

38 Baker to Chapman, 27 February 1874, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

39 King of Tonga to the Church in Sydney, 24 March 1874, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.11.

tone used by Tongans in addressing church dignitaries. The humble petition sent by the King and chiefs in 1871 over the removal of the College was very different in tone, and it seems probable that the change in attitude shown by the 1874 letter reflected Baker's influence. Secondly, the letter demanded that the mission 'give up the schools to the Government', and this appears to have more reference to the controversy between Baker and Moulton than to any purely Tongan desire. Finally, the letter concluded by stressing that it was solely owing to Baker's restraining influence that the King and chiefs were prepared to wait for a decision by Conference, rather than take matters into their own hands; and this also suggests Baker's hand in the drafting.

Whether or not Baker drafted the letter, it was a formidable weapon in his hands. He forwarded it to the Committee in May, accompanying it with a set of specific proposals of his own, which were less far reaching than the King's request, but which he claimed would satisfy Tongan demands. His first proposal was to arrange the mission's leases according to the Wesleyan Model Deed, which would in effect give the Tongan Mission a constitution, with all the hallmarks of an independent Wesleyan Church. Secondly, he proposed local control of finances with native ministers and chiefs represented at Financial District Meetings. Thirdly, he proposed the gradual replace-

ment of European missionaries by native ministers, leaving only one European in each centre as superintendent (he dared to say Bishop). Finally he proposed that Government inspectors be allowed to supervise mission schools.⁴⁰

Baker's moderate proposals were much more likely to be accepted by the Committee than the Tongan demands, and by acting as a mediator Baker was in a very strong position. However, he worked during 1874 to reinforce his case. The strongest opposition, he knew, would come against his proposals for elevating native ministers and for allowing local control of money. With regard to the former he set out to prove that native ministers could perform the tasks previously reserved for Europeans. Hihifo was vacant and Baker appointed a Tongan to take charge of it, explaining to the Committee:

We must work our native ministers more, give them a better status and more responsibility and trust them more than we have - in fact it is no longer will we - we shall have to do so - for they are commencing to demand it and we had better do so and give it to them gracefully than have it wrested from us.⁴¹

When Rabone and Minns retired in July Baker asked the Committee not to send replacements, and declared:

40 Baker to Chapman, 14 May 1874, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

41 Baker to Chapman, 27 February 1874, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

'With three men like Bro. Watkin and a schoolmaster (layman) for the College I would undertake to work the whole of the Friendly Islands District for ten years to come'.⁴² By the time Chapman arrived in December 1874 to carry out his investigations, Baker could show that his proposal to use Tongans as fully fledged ministers was feasible. In proof he could point to Hihifo, which was 'doing better than ever before' under its native pastor.⁴³

To answer objections to local control of finances Baker had to assure the Committee that its income from Tonga would not be threatened. The 1874 Missionary Meetings were therefore very important. To help his cause Baker began publication of a newspaper, Koe Boobooi,⁴⁴ written in Tongan and providing for its readers Baker's views on religious and political matters mixed with selected items of local and foreign news. To enlist local support, work was begun on at least three European-style churches in Tongatapu; and two new educational institutions, a Ladies' College and an Industrial

42 Baker to Chapman, 16 July 1874, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

43 Baker to Chapman, 17 March 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

44 The earliest existing copy of Koe Boobooi known to the writer is vol.II, no.1, dated March 1875. Evidently vol.I was issued in 1874.

School, were inaugurated.⁴⁵ These measures proved adequate to ensure support. In 1874 the mission met all its local expenses, including building costs and the salaries of its schoolmasters and native ministers, and sent a contribution of over £3,000 for Foreign Missions.⁴⁶

Thus when Chapman arrived in Tonga he had little option but to accept Baker's recommendations. Baker, Moulton and Chapman presented the proposals to the King, who endorsed them.⁴⁷ They were then presented by Chapman to the 1875 Conference. The Conference had before it a report of the Tonga District Meeting which claimed: 'the proposals will for the present satisfy the wants of the Tongan Church and must eventually lead to its becoming a native church supported by native means and carried on almost exclusively by native agents'.⁴⁸ It saw the arrangements as an expedient half measure which gave the Tongans the shadow of control while keeping its substance in Sydney, and on this

45 Baker to Chapman, 14 May 1874, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101; Baker to Chapman, 16 July 1874, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101; Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.1, March 1875.

46 The actual figure was £4,384: Report A.W.M.M.S., 1874-75, p.56n.

47 'Minutes of Friendly Islands District Meeting' [1874], the Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 3 February 1875.

48 Ibid.

understanding the proposals were accepted.

The proposals which the Conference accepted were those which Baker himself had made in 1874, and Baker knew better than anyone that these proposals did not constitute independence. The King, on the other hand, had come to regard the establishment of his own church as one of his major objectives, and would have lost faith in Baker had he been offered anything less than full independence. However Tupou was an old man and saw things in simple terms; Baker evidently told him that the Conference decision meant that independence had been granted and the King, it would seem, accepted his word. On 2 June 1875, the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, celebrations were held to make the inauguration of the Siasi Tau'atāina (Independent Church),⁴⁹ and when Parliament met in September the King assured the representatives: 'The Church has been established'.⁵⁰

Baker had apparently purposely misled Tupou and his people, and in doing so he took a calculated risk. Evidently he felt confident that the Conference, for fear of alienating the King, would not dare to contradict him and would tacitly

49 The decision to hold the celebration was announced in Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.3, May 1875.

50 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.6, September and October 1875.

accept his fait accompli. In the meantime he would make acceptance easier by proving that his Church was feasible and viable, and that it was warmly supported by the Tongans. With this intention in mind he set out to demonstrate that Tongans could manage their own affairs. He divided Tongatapu into eleven circuits and put each under the care of a Tongan minister.⁵¹ He kept close watch on each circuit through regular monthly meetings of the Tongan ministry, at which he received reports and issued orders, but the arrangement nevertheless gave the Tongans an enlarged responsibility and an enhanced prestige; it also proved very efficient. Baker left for his annual visit to Niuafu'ou and Niuatopotapu in August 1875, and on his return he reported:

...though I was away five weeks, Mr Moulton purposely keeping aloof, yet when I returned I found everything in the most perfect order - in fact until now we never knew the worth of our native ministers.⁵²

Another major achievement was made in August, when Baker introduced Tongans into the Quarterly Meeting. These meetings, at which financial matters and policy questions were discussed, had hitherto been the exclusive preserve of the European missionaries, and Greenwood had

51 Baker to Chapman, 4 September 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

52 Ibid.

prophesied that dire consequences would follow if Tongans were allowed to participate in them.⁵³

However at the August Quarterly Meeting everything went smoothly, and even Moulton agreed that Baker's policy had been vindicated. Baker reported:

After the meeting Mr Moulton turned to me and said, 'Well Mr Baker, I congratulate you upon your success. It has exceeded all my anticipations.'⁵⁴

Baker had also to prove to the Conference that the finances of the Missionary Committee would not be curtailed if it accepted the new church which he had proclaimed. He therefore required a large collection for 1875, and in this he was not disappointed. The fact that the Tongans believed they had their own church was in itself an incentive to the people to give liberally; and in 1875 there was also another reason for generous giving: the first Wesleyan missionary had arrived in Tonga in 1826, and the year 1876 had been set apart as the year of Jubilee. Accordingly Conference had agreed that in 1875 Tonga should only remit to Sydney a sum equal to its average Foreign Mission contribution. All contributions received at the Missionary Meetings above this figure were to be retained in Tonga as a Jubilee Fund, from which Baker

53 Greenwood, 'Memorandum', n.d., Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 16.

54 Baker to Chapman, 4 September 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

promised to build five new churches and a new College hall and to create an endowment fund for the Tongan Church.⁵⁵ The people were therefore urged to make a special sacrificial effort in 1875, and Baker used all his powers of persuasion and coercion to ensure that the collection would break all previous records.

By 1875 Baker had organised the fakamisinale into a smoothly efficient mechanism for collecting money. For the Jubilee Collection he introduced a new technique. Since 1869 the mission had been accepting promises at the Missionary Meeting from Tongans, though in theory this was limited to those who had cut their copra but had not been able to dry and sell it in time for the collection. Since 1872 the mission had actually been advancing cash to the Tongans on the day of the collection to cover the amount of the promises. This system ensured lavish contributions, but it had two disadvantages: the traders were antagonised and the mission sometimes became involved in embarrassing litigation when the promised copra failed to materialise. The solution would have been for the traders to have advanced cash themselves in return for a lien on the harvest, but the traders were always short of money and had none to spare for loans to the Tongans.⁵⁶

55 Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation...October 1879, p.64.

56 Ibid.

The first missionary to see the possibilities in this situation was Henry Greenwood. In 1874 he lent \$1,428 to P.S. Bloomfield, a copra trader, who in turn advanced it to the people for the Missionary Meeting. The money was returned to the mission on the day of the collection; Bloomfield collected the copra when it was prepared and from the proceeds repaid the mission the sum he had borrowed.⁵⁷ This arrangement proved so satisfactory that Baker expanded it in 1875. He made an arrangement with Weber, Godeffroys' manager, to lend mission cash to Godeffroys' agents in return for the firm's bills of exchange; the traders then lent the money to the Tongans on the day of the meeting. The Tongans gave liberally because the traders were less scrupulous than the missionaries and extended almost unlimited credit. The traders collected the copra when it was prepared, and bore any odium that attended the collection of debts.⁵⁸ This practice might have been morally dubious, but from a strictly business point of view the arrangement was admirable, and at the 1875 meetings, the Tongan Wesleyans, spurred on by the missionaries' exhortations and assisted by easy credit, gave the almost incredible sum of fifteen thousand, two hundred and twenty-seven pounds!⁵⁹

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid., pp.61, 62.

59 Chapman to the Wesleyan Missionary Society, London, 17 March 1877, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.15, enc.2.

The final step in Baker's programme was to obtain a more formal and legal guarantee that his church was independent than that contained in the resolution of the 1875 Conference. His strongest argument lay in the conditions of the mission's land leases. The mission had considerable holdings in Tonga, but the lands had been given piecemeal by Tupou over several decades and most of the leases were invalid. Baker informed the Committee that the leases were 'not worth a rush', and suggested that to protect the lands new leases ought to be issued in accordance with the Wesleyan Model Deed, the instrument under which the Methodist Church held its lands in England and Australia.⁶⁰ The Model Deed, however, was more than a form of lease, for it contained a definitive statement of the history, organisation and practices of Methodism, and was thus, in effect, a form of constitution.⁶¹ The Committee discussed the matter with its lawyers and found that Baker's information was correct; for the leases to be valid they were required to be vested in trustees, and to elect trustees a proper constitution was necessary. The Committee therefore decided to accept Baker's recommendation and had its lawyers

60 Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

61 See copy of 'Tongan Model Deed', F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.12.

prepare the Tongan Model Deed.⁶² It was forwarded to Baker in November 1875, and on 15 December was signed by Baker, Moulton and two leading Tongan laymen. On the same day new leases were signed by Tupou vesting all mission lands in trustees who were to be 'elected according to the usages of the...Church, as expressed in a certain deed called the Model Deed'. The leases were for 99 years and the annual rental for all the lands was to be 'one peppercorn, if demanded'.⁶³

By permitting the signing of the Model Deed the Committee had given tacit approval of Baker's coup, and after 1875 details of affairs in Tonga ceased to appear in Missionary Notices or the Missionary Society's annual reports. There was naturally a certain ambiguity about the status of the new Church. Although by implication from the Model Deed it was independent, yet it was still obliged to remit a stated proportion of its collections to assist foreign missions, and the European missionaries were not controlled by the local body but by the Missionary Committee in Sydney. This ambiguity was to lead to a great

62 Chapman to Baker, 29 March 1875; Chapman to Baker, 2 November 1875; both printed in Report of the Committee Appointed by the Wesleyan Conference to Consider Tongan Affairs, February 1884.

63 'Lease of the Wesleyan Churches and Model Deed', F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.12.

deal of contention in later years, but in 1875 it seemed of little importance. Tonga had its Church, the King was immensely gratified, and Baker was content with what he had achieved. In February 1876 the British Consul for Fiji and Tonga, E.L. Layard, visited Nuku'alofa and Baker told him that he had achieved one of the two great aims of his life: he had made ~~the~~ the Tongan mission independent.⁶⁴

Baker's other aim, he told Layard, was to make Tonga a nation, accepted by other nations as a sovereign independent state. By 1876 he had not achieved this aim, but he had already moved a long way in that direction.

64 Layard to Derby, 8 March 1875, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.1.

CHAPTER 6

THE MAKING OF A MODERN STATE

BAKER'S declining fortunes during 1872 had led him to seek support from Tupou by championing the cause of independence for the Tongan mission. His involvement with the King was not confined to religious matters, however, for at the same time, and for largely the same reasons, he began to take part in the political affairs of the Kingdom.

Secular matters had long held a fascination for Baker. His goal had always been to 'make a name for himself' and the Tongan political scene offered him unique opportunities to do this. To be the mentor and trusted adviser of a King was a position not to be despised, even though the King was, in European eyes, only a petty sovereign of a tiny state. Baker had already filled this position in 1862, and it remained his proudest boast that he had given the Tongans their 'charter of liberty'.¹ The stumbling block in the way of Baker's political career was an injunction in the Wesleyan Missionary Society's 'Instructions to

1 Baker made this claim on many occasions. For instance he told the deputation which had come to Tonga to try him in 1879: '...as long back as 1862 I drew out the charter of their liberty.... I have tried to raise them to be a nation and a people.' (Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation...October 1879, p.75).

Missionaries' which forbade its agents to engage 'in any of the merely civil disputes or local politics of the Colony to which you may be appointed'.² Baker's political activities in the 1860s had contravened this rule and as a result he had been censured. Mindful of this he avoided politics when he returned to Tonga in 1869, putting all his energies into his ecclesiastical duties. A fakataha was held in Ha'apai while Baker was there in June 1870,³ but at his trial by the missionaries soon afterwards there was no mention of his interfering in politics, though inquiry was made into a lengthy catalogue of his shortcomings.⁴ Another fakataha was held in Vava'u in June 1871, but Baker remained in Nuku'alofa.⁵ That he was also absent in spirit from this meeting is indicated by the regulation it passed to force

-
- 2 ¹ 'Instructions to Missionaries', Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society for the Year ending April, 1840, p.xiii.
- 3 Missionary Notices, October 1870, p.210, letter from Baker dated 30 June 1870; the Fiji Times, 22 October 1870, letter from 'an Unfortunate Settler'.
- 4 'Minutes of Special District Meeting, 23 August 1870', Friendly Islands District Meeting Minute Book, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.
- 5 Baker to Rabone, 29 October 1871, MSS and Printed Documents re Baker, reported that a Parliament had been held in Ha'apai and that Baker had remained in Nuku'alofa.

Tongans to kofu fakapapālangi (dress in European clothes), a regulation of which Baker greatly disapproved, regarding it as an attempt to injure his 1871 Missionary Meetings.⁶ It seems therefore that as long as Baker was secure in his eminence as Chairman of the Mission he was not prepared to jeopardise his position by playing politics. By 1872, however, conditions had altered and his fortunes were tottering. He began to look to Tupou for support rather than to the Committee, and the way was open for him to indulge his interest in affairs of state.

If Baker needed Tupou in 1872, it is equally true that Tupou needed Baker. The King's policy had always been motivated by a jealous regard for his own independence and Tonga's territorial integrity. He had expected that his reforms of 1862 would have guaranteed this independence by leading to the formal recognition of Tonga by the Powers, but in this he had been disappointed. In the interim Tonga's position had been made more precarious by events in Samoa and Fiji, events of which Tupou could not have been unaware. In Samoa, for instance, it was commonly rumoured in the early seventies that annexation by one of the Powers was imminent,⁷

6 Baker to Rabone, 27 December 1871, MSS and Printed Documents re Baker.

7 J.W. Davidson, Samoa mo Samoa, MS in the possession of the author, Ch.III, p.23.

rumours that were persistently voiced in the Sydney press in 1872.⁸ They probably had their origin in an ambitious plan by Theodore Weber, the Godeffroy factor in Apia, to colonise Samoa by Germans, using Chinese as indentured labourers. In preparation for this large tracts of land had been bought by Weber and H.I.G.M.S. Hertha had actually been commissioned to visit Samoa to initiate the scheme when the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war caused it to be shelved.⁹ From the other direction British annexation of the group was being pressed vigorously by New Zealand, and in 1871 both Houses of Parliament in that colony petitioned the Queen on the subject.¹⁰ It seemed only a matter of time before one of the Powers would step in. In Fiji, Tonga's other neighbour, events were equally disturbing. In the decade between 1860 and 1870 foreign settlers there had increased from something under forty to nearly two thousand.¹¹ By 1868 approximately 235,000 acres of the best land had been alienated to

8 S. Masterman, The Origins of International Rivalry in Samoa 1848-1884 (London, 1934), p.67, quoting as source: Ferguson to Kimberly (no.10220), 1 August 1873, C.O. 209/230.

9 Memorandum by Sterndale, Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives of New Zealand, 1874, vol.1, 'Papers Relating to the South Sea Islands', A.3.

10 Masterman, The Origins of International Rivalry in Samoa 1848-1884, p.88.

11 Legge, Britain in Fiji 1858-1880, p.44.

these settlers¹² and disputes over land titles had thrown the country into such confusion that visits by British men-of-war and raids by armed settlers were required to maintain the Europeans in possession of their lands.¹³ In June 1871 a mixed government of whites and Fijians had been set up under Cakobau, but this had failed to win the support of the settlers.¹⁴ By 1872 Fiji was faced with the prospect of civil war and in desperation Cakobau, in January 1873, offered to cede his kingdom to Britain.¹⁵

Realising the turn events were taking in Fiji, Tupou had severed all his connections with his neighbour in 1868. He had declined to accept the cession of Bua, had hauled down the Tongan flag in Lakeba and had ordered Ma'afu not to 'involve this Government in Fijian affairs'.¹⁶ The declared object of these moves was 'to keep this Government clear from Fijian political

12 Ibid., p.46.

13 Ibid., p.49, footnote 2.

14 Ibid., pp.78-9.

15 Ibid., pp.85-6.

16 'Resolutions passed by the Tongan Parliament, June 1868', signed Tubou Haabai [David Moss], 28 June 1868, H.B.M. Consul, Fiji, Miscellaneous Papers on Fiji-Tonga Relations, 1862-1869, Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva.

embarrassments';¹⁷ if Fiji was annexed Tupou did not want Tonga to be involved. This precautionary measure may have removed any technical grounds for British interference in Tonga in the event of Britain's acquiring Fiji, but by the early seventies British residents in Tupou's own domains, encouraged no doubt by the example of their fellows in Fiji, were beginning to press their own case for the Friendly Islands to be included in the Empire. A British resident in Tonga, subscribing himself 'An Unfortunate Settler', published his views in the Fiji Times in October 1870. He complained of the 'absurd restrictions' against settlers buying land in Tonga, and warned:

They will find their efforts to stay the tide of immigration useless...and England, being aware of the justice and importance of protecting, if not actually governing her subjects in these seas, the Anglo-Australian race will settle and find a living in the Friendly Islands, in spite of all the laws passed by Kings and Chiefs.¹⁸

The arrogant and provocative attitude assumed by British subjects in Tonga was exemplified by the case of Phillip Payne, a copra trader who was brought before a Tongan court and ordered to pay 8/- damages

17 Tubou Haabai, Secretary, Tongan Government, to J.B. Thurston, H.B.M. Acting Consul for Fiji and Tonga, 4 February 1869 H.B.M. Consul Fiji, Miscellaneous Papers on Fiji-Tonga Relations, 1862-1869, Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva.

18 The Fiji Times, 22 October 1870.

to the owner of a roll of tapa which had been trampled on and damaged by Payne's horse. Payne's defence was: 'it is true the horse damaged the tapa but I did not order the horse to do so'. On these grounds he refused to pay the damages and insisted his case be tried by the captain of a British man-of-war. The judges warned Payne that if he was not prepared to accept the laws of Tonga he would have to leave the country. The court record continues:

Upon which Phillip laughed scornfully at all the judges and said 'as if I should pay, and in case I do not will you be able to send me from Tonga?'.¹⁹

Tupou answered this question by forbidding any Tongan to trade with Payne and by giving him six months to quit the country. The other British residents thereupon petitioned the Governor of New South Wales complaining of 'the manner Europeans are treated and what they are subjected to in these islands' and requesting the Governor to 'define a limit to the arbitrary authority of a government, which to say the least, is and only

19 Tonga Court Records, 'In re Phillip Payne', 7 September 1870, H.B.M. Vice-Consul and Deputy Commissioner, Tonga. General Correspondence Inwards 1878-1944 [cited henceforth by its file number, F3/2], bundle for 1880, item no.9 [future citation thus: F3/2/80, no.9], Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva.

can be semi-civilized'.²⁰

Between 1864 and 1872 Tupou had relied upon his secretary, David Moss, in his dealings with the Europeans. Moss had been adopted by the King, in accordance with Tongan custom, under the name Tupou Ha'apai. He wrote the King's letters, drafted government regulations and acted as paymaster and receiver of revenues.²¹ Moss had adopted many Tongan customs, and one observer, writing some years later, described how:

[Moss] I am ashamed to say, in the presence of his royal master, crouched on his hams Vaka-Tonga (Tonga-fashion). This white (?) man was scaly through drinking kava.²²

But despite his adoption of Tongan ways Moss retained his loyalty to his fellow Europeans and

-
- 20 Robert Hanslip and eighteen others to the Earl of Belmore, Governor of New South Wales, February 1871, F3/2/80, no.9.
- 21 The first mention of Moss acting as the King's secretary dates from March 1865, when he was one of the signatories to a treaty between Tupou and Tufi Neiau of Lakeba (H.B.M. Consul, Fiji, Miscellaneous Papers on Fiji-Tonga Relations, 1862-1869, Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva); Foljambe, who visited Tonga in 1865, mentioned the King's English 'Prime Minister', remarking that the latter had been in Tonga for eleven years (Foljambe, Three Years on the Australian Station, p.166); in the same year Meade noted that Moss was acting as the King's paymaster (Meade, A Ride through New Zealand, p.205).
- 22 The Auckland Evening Bell, 16 March 1887, an unsigned letter reporting a visit to Tonga made by the writer many years earlier.

remained on intimate terms with them.²³ If there was a conflict of interests between Tupou and the Beach, he could not be relied upon, and by 1872 the King needed an adviser whose loyalty was unquestionable. Baker seemed the obvious choice. He was already the King's doctor and chaplain; his advice in the past had been useful; because of his Missionary Meetings he was so unpopular with the traders that problems of divided loyalty were unlikely to trouble him.

The rapprochement between Baker and Tupou came about in mid-1872. In December 1871 the King had supported Moulton over the College removal and the 1871 fakataha had shown a marked resentment towards Baker's Missionary Meetings, but by July 1872 Moss had retired to private life²⁴ and Baker could report: 'The King could not be kinder - at present I am his private counsellor on matters

23 Moss supplied information to W.C. Young to be used by the traders in their complaint to Consul Layard in 1876 about the conduct of the Tonga Government: Young to Layard, 20 February 1876, Miscellaneous Papers, set no.43, item 2, enc.2, Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva [cited henceforth as F3/43, no.2, enc.2, and similarly for other items in this set].

24 In November 1871 Baker informed Rabone: 'Mrs. Moss is very ill with her hands, her fingers decaying the same as in leprosy' (Baker to Rabone, 27 December 1871, MSS and Printed Documents re Baker). One suspects that Baker may have mentioned the word 'leprosy' to Tupou, and at the same time drawn attention to Moss's own 'scaly hands', thus bringing about Moss's dismissal.

of importance'.²⁵ It was also at this time that Baker began moving for an independent church in Tonga. We must assume that Baker and Tupou had come to a tacit agreement: Baker would assist the King in his efforts to maintain his independence, the King would support Baker against his critics and missionary superiors. By the end of 1872 Baker was firmly entrenched as the King's mentor and rumours were circulating in Tonga that Tupou intended to make him his Prime Minister.²⁶ Baker was in Sydney at the time putting his case for independence for the mission, but Moulton was in Tonga, and was sufficiently disturbed by the rumours to intervene. Baker wrote to Chapman in June 1873:

It seems that when the report was spread the King was going to appoint me Premier during my absence in Sydney that Mr Moulton went to the Governor and said, 'If Moss, whom we admit was a fool and had no education was able to do as he liked with you and turn you round his finger, how about Mr. Baker who has been educated and trained and knows everything'.²⁷

Baker was not made Premier, although his new relationship with Tupou gave him great influence, and by May 1873 he was admitting his new status to his superiors. He advised Chapman:

25 Baker to Rabone, 18 July 1872, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

26 Baker, Memoirs, p.10.

27 Baker to Chapman, 9 June 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

I am aware of the great responsibility laid upon me and of the powerful influence I wield.... When I left [for Sydney in December 1872] I made a request to the King about the alteration of certain laws and customs - they have had a meeting of chiefs and passed them all.²⁸

The partnership of Tupou and Baker was thus firmly launched by the beginning of 1873. It was to last for seventeen years and to bring about great changes in Tonga. At its most fundamental level this partnership was based on mutual interest and support, but it grew to be more than this. Baker came to identify himself with the King and his people: an identification perhaps marred by humbug and an eye for the main chance, but nevertheless productive of lasting benefit to Tonga.

Baker's first acts in his new role were concerned with changing Tupou's public image. Perhaps Baker felt that Europeans would be more impressed by a European-style monarch than by a native chief, or perhaps he was merely concerned with flattering Tongan dignity to secure his own position. Probably it was a combination of both these motives that led him to invest Tupou with the symbols of majesty in 1873. In Baker's view the first necessity for a King was a crown. The 1870 fakataha had already investigated this matter. The chiefs no doubt felt piqued when Cakobau of

28 Baker to Chapman, 12 May 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

Fiji, regarded by Tongans as a semi-barbarian,²⁹ had been formally crowned in 1867, and only the cost involved had prevented them from obtaining a crown for Tupou.³⁰ Baker solved the problem with characteristic simplicity. He had a crown made in Sydney. It was not very costly and it served the purpose very well, despite the verdigris in its flutings.³¹ At the same time Baker presented the King with the Great Seal of Tonga and the Royal Standard.³² The seal, an ornate device containing a cross, a crown, a dove, three swords and three stars, bore the legend 'Koe otua mo Toga ko Hoku Tofia' (God and Tonga are my inheritance). The concept was undoubtedly Baker's, but the drafting was more than likely the work of some unknown Sydney artist, for the sketches of boats and buildings with which Baker sometimes illuminated his letters do not reveal an artistic talent equal to the task.³³ The seal first appeared on government

-
- 29 Tongans have always regarded Fijians with some contempt, and even today 'Fijian' is used in Tonga as a pejorative adjective, e.g., a flea is rendered in Tongan as 'a Fijian louse', and an unpalatable banana is a 'Fijian banana'.
- 30 The Fiji Times, 22 October 1870, letter from 'An Unfortunate Settler'.
- 31 Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, p.252.
- 32 Baker, Memoirs, p.8.
- 33 E.g., Baker to Chapman, 4 September 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

letters late in 1873,³⁴ though it was not formally accepted until the fakataha met in 1874.³⁵ The Royal Standard comprised the seal motif superimposed on the Tongan flag. It was probably also at this time that Baker gave Tonga its National Anthem. Moulton, some time before 1869, had written Tongan words to the German anthem 'Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser' (Haydn, Opus 76, No.3), and this had been used as the Tongan anthem until this time.³⁶ Baker replaced this with a beautiful melody of unknown origin to which words were set by 'Unga, Tupou's son.³⁷ The first reported singing of this anthem dates from July 1874, but it was probably in use earlier.³⁸

Crowns, seals, and anthems had something of a comic opera flavour in the Tongan context, and Baker's activities at this stage were regarded by the Europeans as ridiculous but relatively

34 Cocker (for Tupou) to Young, 25 November 1873, F3/43, no.2.

35 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.6, September and October 1875.

36 This anthem was sung to Rabone and Watkin when they visited Tupou College in 1869: 'Tupou College Report', Report A.W.M.M.S., 1869-70, p.23.

37 Information given by the Hon. Ve'ehala, during an interview with the writer in Nuku'alofa, November 1963.

38 The Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 31 July 1874, p.80.

innocuous. In November 1873, however, the traders suddenly found that from January 1874 they were to pay annual licence fees of £5 for the right to trade, and this was a more serious matter.³⁹

A meeting of Europeans was called by W.C. Young to demand 'no taxation without representation' and twenty-three residents petitioned the King for the right to elect two Europeans to the annual fakataha.⁴⁰ This was, in a way, a compliment to Baker's administration, for it represented quasi-recognition of the Government by the traders, but Baker saw it as a threat to his position. At the same time another of Baker's activities had aroused the indignation of the missionaries. The brethren were already disturbed by their Chairman's independent attitude and suspected that he had misrepresented their wishes at the 1873 Conference. The new affront was the launching of a government sugar plantation, worked under Baker's supervision and financed by Baker's money.⁴¹ The rules of the Wesleyan Missionary Society explicitly stated that

39 'What Gave Rise to the Petition of White Residents of Tonga in November 1873', unsigned memorandum, F3/43, no.2, enc.

40 The original of the petition is lost, but the demands of the petitioners are outlined in the King's answer: Cocker to Young, et.al., 25 November 1873, F3/43. no.2.

41 Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

'no travelling preacher shall follow trade'⁴² and, accordingly, the missionaries prepared to call their Chairman to account at the December 1873 District Meeting. The meeting was a stormy one. Moulton charged Baker with interfering in politics, being virtually Government Secretary and manager of the sugar plantation and with issuing false information to the previous Conference as to the views of the Friendly Islands' missionaries concerning the formation of an independent church. Baker, faced with the threat of a formal charge being preferred before Conference, agreed to wind up the sugar plantation, have a Government Secretary appointed and avoid direct interference in political matters.⁴³ To the Committee, however, he defended himself volubly:

All I have ever done is to give the King advice...anything that has been done has been the King's act not mine. He may have acted on my advice, but with himself has been the responsibility, and certainly I cannot see any harm in it. Shall I let him in times of perplexity and difficulty let him [sic] be guided by men who are sworn enemies of the lotu and all that is good - no.⁴⁴

-
- 42 'Instructions to Missionaries', Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society for the Year Ending April 1840, p.ix.
- 43 Moulton to Chapman, 29 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99; Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.
- 44 Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

However he promised 'to keep in the background',⁴⁵ in the future though he warned that: 'I should always claim my right to advise the King when he sought my advice'.⁴⁶

During 1874 Baker did keep in the background. A Government Secretary was appointed. The first was Joseph Cocker, who had filled the post of British Consul in Tonga in the early 1860s. Cocker, however, was a trader and his sympathies lay with the Europeans.⁴⁷ After a month or two he was replaced by J.P. Miller, who was an American citizen and therefore unlikely to favour British annexation, and a confirmed alcoholic and therefore happy to hold a sinecure and leave the work to Baker.⁴⁸ The only real effect of the opposition of the traders and the missionaries was therefore to drive Baker more

45 Baker to Chapman, 20 November 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

46 Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

47 Cocker was one of the spokesmen for the British traders in 1876 and corresponded on their behalf with Layard: F3/43, no.2.

48 Miller was finally dismissed in September 1878, by which time he was taking opium to relieve his delirium tremens: Maudslay to Gordon, 30 September 1878, a letter from a printed document labelled 'correspondence', and containing private and semi-official correspondence between Alfred Maudslay and Sir Arthur Gordon during 1878 and 1879 [cited henceforth as: Maudslay, Private Corresp.].

firmly into the King's camp. His influence, though exerted behind the scenes, continued to grow.

The Tongan Government, under Baker's guidance, was showing a new confidence in its dealings with the Europeans. The most revealing sign of this was to be seen in its reply to the petition of the Europeans to elect representatives to the fakataha. The reply was subscribed with Cocker's signature - Baker had won his temporary support by lending two hundred and fifty pounds interest-free to his part-Tongan sons to enable them to set up as traders⁴⁹ - but the substance of the reply came from Baker, as he later freely admitted.⁵⁰ The petition was refused and the petitioners were informed that only Tongan subjects could sit on the fakataha. If, when Britain recognised Tonga, the petitioners should apply for Tongan naturalisation their request would be reconsidered. It was suggested that, in the meantime, they could prove their bona fides by paying their taxes promptly. Concerning their protest about 'taxation without representation', they were informed that the Colony of Victoria imposed a heavy head tax on a certain class of

49 Baker to Chapman, 3 May 1876, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

50 Baker in answer to the Rev. J. Thomas' charges against him at the Friendly Islands District Meeting, 11 December 1876, Friendly Islands District Meetings Minute Book, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

aliens, and certainly did not allow them into Parliament.⁵¹ The traders were naturally incensed, and Young wrote in the margin of his copy of the reply: 'Classing us with Chinamen is a gratuitous insult'.⁵²

The event which really crystallised Baker's attitude was the British annexation of Fiji, which occurred in October 1874. This event, long impending, confirmed Tupou's worst fears, and thereafter he was to view every move of Britain with suspicion. Baker had to decide at this point whether to follow the King and oppose his own country, or lose his influence. His choice was made easier by the apparent justice of the King's cause. Tupou was merely seeking to maintain his independence, and this must have appealed to Baker's vaguely liberal sympathies. There was honour to be won in such a cause, and Baker sought to 'make a name for himself'. Moreover the King was his sole support, the real basis of his authority and the source of his status. He chose to follow the King.

Baker's choice resulted in his making a formal statement of his aims to the District Meeting which was held in December 1874. Here he informed the missionaries and the Rev. Benjamin

51 Cocker to Young, et.al., 25 November 1873, F3/43, no.2.

52 Ibid.

Chapman, who was visiting from Sydney, that the two objects of his life were 'to make Tonga a church and a nation',⁵³ a statement which he was to repeat on many occasions. When E.L. Layard, British Consul in Fiji paid a visit in February 1876 he reported: 'Mr. Baker informed me the two aims of his life were 1st: to make the mission self supportion; 2ndly to enrol Tonga in the family of nations'.⁵⁴ These aims were developed and expounded in Koe Boobooi, which Baker began publishing late in 1874. The earliest surviving issue dates from March 1875, but this issue contains a coherent and articulate statement of Baker's views:

The flag we have put up has two colours, and on it are to be found these words: Church and Government, which of course means Church and Government of Tonga. ...We will no longer hide the purpose of our labour...our aim is 'Keep Tonga for the Tongans'.⁵⁵

'Tonga ma'a Tonga' (Tonga for the Tongans) became Baker's political slogan, and eventually the slogan of the Government. Through 1875 Baker continued to expound the proposition. In the May 1875 Koe Boobooi he wrote: 'We speak of what we know will be bad for the future, and that is a big wave of

53 Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation...October 1879, p.75.

54 Layard to Derby, 8 March 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.1.

55 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.1, March 1875.

incoming Europeans...if they all settle here what will become of the Tongans? Will they overflow into the sea?'.⁵⁶ In June he reported the epidemic of measles which the visit of H.M.S. Dido had introduced into Fiji in January 1875. He pressed for a quarantine law to prevent a similar occurrence in Tonga, and warned: 'The deaths of these Fijian people [the 40,000 measles victims] were caused by the surrender of the country to Britain'.⁵⁷ When the Vava'u Quarterly Meeting of chiefs suggested that chiefs be empowered to grant land leases to Europeans for extended periods, provided the Europeans were 'good men', Baker criticised them publicly: 'It is clear that a man who gives the chiefs strong liquor is a good man in the chiefs' opinion',⁵⁸ and when the Ha'apai Quarterly Meeting elected three Europeans to sit as jurors on cases in which Europeans were involved, Baker lampooned the Ha'apai chiefs for abrogating the sovereign rights of Tonga.⁵⁹

Another aspect of Baker's policy of making Tonga a nation may be seen in his endeavours to introduce some of the 'benefits of civilisation' during this period. In March 1875 it was lavatories

56 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.3.

57 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.4.

58 Ibid.

59 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.5, July 1875.

that were receiving his attention. Some time earlier the Government had enacted that all landholders should build a privy. Baker discovered that one landholder living in Nuku'alofa had built his on his land in Vava'u, two hundred miles away, while others used ~~theirs~~ to cook in or as a storehouse for root vegetables. Baker called for vigorous government inspection.⁶⁰ A month later the subject of his editorial was the untidiness of Tongan cemeteries.⁶¹

At the same time Baker was striving to diversify Tongan agriculture by introducing new cash crops to supplement the staple, copra. In April 1875 he advised his readers that he had given a consignment of peanuts to the Government for distribution to interested landholders. He explained to his readers: 'the essential thing nowadays is that the Government should find out what would be useful to Tonga and procure it to be cultivated by the people'.⁶² Few of Baker's agricultural experiments took root, but a variety of Chinese banana is known in Tonga today as misipeka (Mr Baker), a mute testimony to one success.

It was also at this time, and under Baker's aegis, that work was commenced on several

60 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.1.

61 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.2, April 1875.

62 Ibid.

public buildings in Nuku'alofa, including a Court House and extensive additions to the Palace.⁶³ A Government Treasury was also set up,⁶⁴ and a Savings Bank was established with capital provided jointly by Baker and the Government. This latter venture was of dubious propriety. Its main purpose was, in Baker's words, 'to advance deposits on something like a Building Society principle so as to enable the natives to build houses and get homes for themselves', and he claimed his motives in establishing it were purely philanthropic. He wrote: 'I was led away with the desire to benefit Tonga and the natives and advance the interests of my work...my other thought, it was teaching the Tonga Government how to manage their finances'. That the bank was a commercial venture Baker disclaimed: 'As regards my thinking of making any profit by it...I must deny in toto that ever such a thought entered my head'.⁶⁵ Such protests, however, must be viewed with deep suspicion. As virtual manager of the bank (Thorley, the nominal

63 Ibid.

64 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.6, September and October 1875.

65 Notification of the establishment of the Savings Bank was given in Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.2; Baker explained his involvement in the bank in a letter to Chapman: Baker to Chapman, 3 May 1876, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

manager, was a hopeless drunkard)⁶⁶ Baker did not let his love for Tonga interfere with ensuring a dividend of 10 per cent on his capital.⁶⁷ Asaeli Taufa, Makisi Tonga, Leka, and Tevita Lehauli were sold up and their town leases taken by Baker when they became indebted to the bank, apparently through not comprehending the nature of compound interest,⁶⁸ and the widow and child of Matekitonga, late Governor of Vava'u, were left almost destitute when Baker ordered their effects sold to pay the chief's debt.⁶⁹ But with a little charity Baker may be credited with having the benevolent motives he claimed, as well as purely commercial ones.

All Baker's political activities during this period were but minor matters, however, compared with work on a new constitution for Tonga. This constitution, which he devised and which was promulgated in November 1875, was of very great significance and marked a major step in Tonga's

66 Maudslay to Gordon, 25 January 1879, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.25.

67 Maudslay to Salisbury, 24 January 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.46, reporting Thorley's statement that Baker had a paid-up capital of \$7,500 (£1,500) in the bank. When it was wound up the capital was refunded and a dividend of 10 per cent paid.

68 Maudslay to Salisbury, 24 January 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.46, enc.2.

69 Wilkinson to Gordon, 15 July 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.6.

progress towards becoming a modern civilised state, recognised as such by the Powers. Baker had been working on it since he first began to advise the King. During his visit to Sydney at the end of 1872 he had discussions with Sir Henry Parkes, the New South Wales Premier, concerning this and allied matters,⁷⁰ and Parkes had presented him with a copy of 'all the laws of that Government [New South Wales] since its inception' as a guide in framing Tongan legislation.⁷¹ While in Sydney Baker also visited Reeve, St Julian's successor as Hawaiian Consul-General, seeking 'friendly advice and assistance', and it was probably from Reeve that Baker obtained his copy of the Hawaiian Constitution on which the Tongan one was to be based.⁷² By December 1873 Baker had convinced Tupou that a new constitution was needed, and had begun work on the draft.⁷³ During 1874 the draft was completed and submitted to a firm of lawyers in Auckland, New Zealand, for rephrasing in correct legal language and, after being translated into Tongan was submitted to Tupou.

70 Baker to Chapman, 20 November 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

71 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.6.

72 Jason Horne, Primacy of the Pacific under the Hawaiian Kingdom (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Hawaii, 1951), p.42.

73 Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1873, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

In final form it was presented to the fakataha which met in Nuku'afofa in September 1875.⁷⁴

During 1875 Baker used Koe Boobooi to inform the people about the new constitution. In March he explained it by likening it to the Bible. The Bible was a book which showed people how to be 'free in spirit' and gave the rules for running the church. A constitution fulfilled a similar function for a government:

It is a book of freedom. It is a book of rules for the administration of the country, and how the King must be appointed and his jurisdiction, and also the judges and magistrates...when a constitution is in writing and in use, then we all are truly FREE.⁷⁵

He drew attention to the folly of the chiefs at their quarterly meetings, through which regional areas had been governed since 1862, and advocated a unified central administration. In June 1875 he wrote:

Let there be one law, one flag and one government. Let the Quarterly Meetings be abolished for all time, and let us have only one Parliament, one Treasury and one set of regulations.⁷⁶

By the time the fakataha met in September the chiefs had been conditioned to expect some sweeping changes, and the whole country had had

74 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.6.

75 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.1.

76 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.4.

the opportunity to discuss the new concept of constitutional government at the faikava (kava parties), which in Tonga provide the forum for the debating of all political questions at the grass roots level. Tupou helped to ensure that the Constitution would pass the fakataha by his speech at the opening of the session. It was published in Koe Boobooi for all to read:

You are aware that our country's present form of government is dependent on me. My wishes are the laws. It is only I who select those who join this meeting and I also please myself who shall succeed to the chiefly positions, and I have power to change any title. But it appears to me that this was only suited to the dark period of the Government. A new era in Tonga has arrived, an enlightened new epoch and I am prepared to give Tonga a constitution and I, with those who shall succeed me, will rule constitutionally and this constitution will become the protection of Tonga for ever.⁷⁷

The draft was accepted by the chiefs and became law on 4 November 1875.

The new constitution was a long document of 132 articles. The first section was based almost entirely on the Hawaiian model. It contained a declaration of rights guaranteeing the fundamental freedoms of life, liberty and property, freedom of worship, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press. The equality of all men, chiefs and commoners, Tongans and Europeans, before the law

77 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.6.

was guaranteed, as was the right of adult males to elect representatives to a Legislative Assembly. In return for these privileges all adult males, Tongan and European, acknowledged the right of the state to exact taxes and jury service.

The second section dealt with the form of government which was to be set up. The succession to the throne was declared to belong to 'Unga and his legitimate heirs by primogeniture. It was the King's prerogative to nominate the Cabinet and governors and to appoint (though not to disinherit), the chiefs. A Legislative Assembly was to be created composed of the Cabinet, twenty of the important title holders, thereafter to be classed as nobles, and twenty representatives of the people, elected by adult male franchise. The judiciary comprised a Supreme Court and Circuit Court, to which justices were appointed by the King, and police courts to which magistrates were appointed by the Assembly.

The third section was concerned with land tenure. The prohibition against the alienation of land was confirmed, and remained the first principle of Tongan land laws. Other clauses described a new system of tenure. The land in the Kingdom was divided into two categories, town lands and bush or plantation lands. All town land was to be the property of the Government who would lease town allotments ('api kolo) for periods of 21 years to Tongans or European dwelling in the town

or village concerned. Bush lands were divided into tofi'a, or inheritances, vested either in the King or in individual nobles. Farmlets ('api'uta) could be obtained by commoners by leasing them at rates fixed by the Legislative Assembly from the owner of the tofi'a concerned. Title holders could also lease lands to Europeans, but permission for such leases had first to be granted by Cabinet: 'to prevent any chief acting foolishly in leasing the whole of his land to white residents and driving the Tongese into the sea'.⁷⁸

The constitution, despite its length and sophistication, was to some extent an extension and consummation of earlier attempts in 1839, 1850 and 1862, to organised effective government in Tonga on liberal western lines. It did not represent, therefore, a complete break with the past. However, many features of the new instrument were completely novel to Tongans. One such feature was the arrangement for the succession. Before 1875 the succession to a title was controlled by the senior members of the ha'a, kāinga, or fa'ahinga concerned, who chose the heir they considered most fitted for the position from among the lineal and collateral descendants or relatives of the previous title holder. Tupou had received his Tu'i Kanokupolu title from his uncle, Siosaia, though Siosaia's son, Ma'afu, was alive. Thus according

78 The Constitution of Tonga, 1875, Clause 130.

to Tongan usage the next heir to the title, and with it the Tongan throne, would probably have been Ma'afu, the Tu'i Lau. Tupou explained that Ma'afu had become a British subject with the cession of Fiji, and to pass on the succession to him would have endangered Tonga's independence. A lineal succession, moreover, was simpler and less liable to dispute.⁷⁹ Tupou therefore nominated his son, 'Unga, illegitimate by Christian standards, as Crown Prince, with 'Unga's son Ngū as next in line.⁸⁰ Similar arrangements were adopted for the succession of all hereditary titles, and even for the modest legacies of commoners. The orderly and relatively untroubled succession of Tupou II which followed the death of Tupou in 1893 was a vindication of Baker's law of inheritance.

Another new concept which the constitution embodied was that of a limited monarchy. In the past the fakataha had merely served to advise the King, and when the King wished he could override its opposition, as had been demonstrated in 1862 when Tupou had emancipated the commoners despite opposition from the chiefs. Under the constitution the King, in theory if not in actual practice, vested his sovereignty in Parliament. The

79 'The King's Speech at the Opening of Parliament', Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.6.

80 'Unga's mother was one of the wives whom Tupou abandoned when he embraced Christianity.

Parliament itself was very different from the old fakataha. At the fakataha all title holders were represented;⁸¹ in the new Parliament only twenty title holders, the new corps of hereditary nobles, could sit by right, while an equal number of elected representatives, who might well be commoners, sat with them.

The creation of the new nobility was one of the most surprising features of the constitution, for it reversed the trends of the earlier codes. Since 1839 Tupou had been trying to limit the power of the chiefs by restricting their privileges over the commoners, by emphasising their duties towards the King, and most of all by assuming ownership of their lands. In the case of twenty of the more influential title holders this process was now reversed. They were given noble titles and large estates, an hereditary seat in Parliament and confirmation of their influence and privilege. A larger body of minor chiefs and kau matāpule, those who were not made nobles, were however reduced to the ranks in all but title.

The creation of a nobility was probably a move by Baker to enlist the support of the more powerful chiefs, but there is nevertheless a certain consistency in it. In 1862 Baker had tried to free the commoners from the exactions of the chiefs, but in practice this had not worked. The reason

80 Baker, Memoirs, p.8.

lay in the control of land. It is difficult to reconstruct the exact nature of land tenure before 1875, but it would seem that large areas were controlled by powerful chiefs (hou'eiki) who allotted land to dependent lesser title holders (foto tehina) and kau matāpule), who were the heads of extended families (fa'ahinga), and they in turn allotted it to individual landholders within their social unit. Each of these transactions involved obligations on the recipient, so that while chiefs of all ranks had an effective sanction in their control over the distribution of land, the Emancipation Proclamation could not be made fully effective. However, under the new land laws landholding was a matter arranged directly between landholder and noble at rates specified by Parliament, and all the intermediate transactions and obligations were eliminated. The new arrangement was therefore consistent with the 1862 proclamation, and in effect an attempt to make it practicable.

Baker's constitution was a document of very great significance. There were, nevertheless, many who were critical. A.W. Mackay, an anti-Baker propagandist, described it as 'the unsuitable, unworkable and abortive Constitution of 1875, which certainly reflects no credit on anyone connected with it'.⁸² Alfred Maudslay, British Vice-Consul in Tonga in 1878, wrote: 'I have never met a

82 The Sydney Evening News, 21 October 1897.

native from the King down who pretended to understand it, and if one may form any judgement from the English translation, this is little to be wondered at'.⁸³ The most unkindest cut came from the British adviser in Tonga in 1890, Basil Thomson, who sneered: 'the constitution...was written in English that would have disgraced a housemaid'.⁸⁴ These were, however, partisan views. In fact it would probably be impossible to find any contemporary views on such a contentious issue that were not partisan, and it is only recently that the constitution has been examined on its merits as a legal document by authorities such as Geoffrey Sawyer, Professor of Law at the Australian National University, and Tupou Posesi Fanua, an Australian-educated Tongan barrister. Tupou Posesi described the constitution as 'a work of genius in its understanding of Tongan ways and customs'.⁸⁵ Professor Sawyer, while noting certain 'ambiguities, inconsistencies and false assumptions' in the document nevertheless praised it as 'the work of a man fairly familiar with Tongan institutions and the sort of problems with which a constitution would have to deal'. The criticisms of the British

83 Maudslay to Salisbury, 23 January 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.44.

84 Thomson, The Scene Changes, p.143.

85 Statement given to the writer during an interview in Nuku'alofa, December 1963.

Baker holding the Constitution of Tonga

A statue erected by his daughters
over his grave at Ha'apai.



officials, he remarked, reflected 'an element of intellectual snobbery and of professional jealousy', rather than a proper evaluation of Baker's work.⁸⁶

For the generality of Tongans, however, there were no reservations. Tupou had said to the 1875 fakataha: 'May it [the constitution] become the most precious treasure of this country';⁸⁷ and the Tongans took him at his word. Twenty years later Basil Thomson, in the interests of simplicity, tried to amend some of Baker's phraseology, but his efforts met with the most obstinate resistance.⁸⁸ In some frustration he wrote: 'The Konisitutone [constitution]...had been introduced by the missionaries and was intimately connected, they believed, with its outlandish fellow Konisienisi [conscience] and in some mysterious way it elevated their country to the level of one of the Great Powers'.⁸⁹ Tonga was proud of its constitution; in fact, as Thomson declared: 'The Tongans regarded it as Holy Writ'.⁹⁰

The 1875 Parliament also promulgated a code of laws which Baker had compiled, apparently

86 From a letter to the writer dated 9 May 1963.

87 'The King's Speech at the Opening of Parliament', Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.6.

88 Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, pp.229, 230.

89 Ibid., p.365.

90 Thomson, The Scene Changes, p.143.

using the legislation of New South Wales, which had been provided by Parkes, as the model for language and construction. The code passed through the fakataha without much comment, probably because it contained little that was new; Baker had merely rephrased existing laws, integrating them in an ordered and comprehensive code. The new code, however, provoked a storm of criticism from British observers and Baker, as its author, was vilified. The main target of Baker's detractors was the social and sumptuary laws embodied in the code. For instance, under the new code fornication and adultery were made criminal offences, and fines of \$25 and \$60 respectively were provided for offenders.⁹¹ In 1879 Alfred Maudslay said of these laws: 'The laws dealing with the relation of sexes have more the appearance of a missionary wishing to punish sin than a statesman wishing to prevent the increase of crime'.⁹² Maudslay's comment was no doubt true, but the particular missionary at fault in this case was not Baker but the Rev. J. Thomas, a predecessor of forty years earlier. The Vava'u Code of 1839, in its first clause, had stated: 'The laws of this our land prohibit - murder, theft, adultery, fornication

91 Maudslay to Salisbury, 23 January 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.44, encs.6, 7.

92 Maudslay to Salisbury, 23 January 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.44.

and the retailing of spirits', and Thomas, not Baker, was Tupou's adviser in 1839.⁹³ Similarly the Code of 1850 provided three months' imprisonment (or rather its Tongan equivalent, work for the Government) for offenders in each of these categories,⁹⁴ and the Code of 1862 punished adultery by twelve months' labour and fornication by two month's labour.⁹⁵ It is therefore apparent that the fine of \$60 (£12) provided in the new code for these offences was neither new nor, in comparison with previous penalties, harsh.

Other laws in the new code for which Baker was criticised were those prohibiting dancing and wrestling, with fines of \$5 and \$10 respectively for offenders. Maudslay said of these: 'The most innocent amusements were tabooed, and laws passed especially to limit wrestling and dancing, although the dancing of the Tongans does not in any way offend against ordinary ideas of propriety'.⁹⁶

93 'Code of Laws Recently Promulgated by King George of Vavou', [1839], Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society for the Year ending April, 1840, appendix A, p.129.

94 'The Laws of the Kingdoms of Tonga, Haabai and Vavau' [1850], reproduced in: Young, Journal of a Deputation, p.434.

95 'Translation of Tongan Laws by the Rev. R. Amos' [June 1862], Missionary Notices, January 1863, p.343.

96 Maudslay to Salisbury, 23 January 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.44.

There is no doubt that Baker, like all other missionaries in Tonga, did disapprove of dancing, for the dances, he claimed, were performed nude and customarily terminated in amusements that were far from innocent.⁹⁷ However, he was not responsible for the law prohibiting these pastimes. The 1850 Code, promulgated a decade before Baker's arrival in Tonga contained the following clause:

Let all people know that dancing is strictly forbidden, as well as all Heathen Customs; and if any are found practising such they shall be tried and on being proven guilty, work one month, and in case of a repetition, two months.⁹⁸

The most bitter criticism of all was directed at the Law on Tapa included in Baker's code by which, between 1876 and 1878, the manufacture and wearing of the native cloth was to be progressively eliminated. Consul Layard, who visited Tonga in February 1876 reported that this law was framed by Baker to ensure the house of Godeffroy a market for cotton cloth, on the sale of which Baker was supposed to receive a commission.⁹⁹ Miss Gordon-Cummings wrote of her visit to Nuku'alofa in 1877:

97 'Friendly Islands District Report 1878', M.O.M.C., set 169.

98 1850 Code, Clause XI.

99 Layard to Derby, 8 March 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.1.

I regret to say that a considerable proportion of the people were like hideously dressed up apes,.... Here the influence of certain persons interested in trade is so strong that the manufacture of tappa [tapa] is discouraged by every possible means.¹⁰⁰

Criticisms like these were echoed and exaggerated by others.¹⁰¹ Yet on closer examination it is evident that not only was Baker not responsible for the tapa law, but that he was opposed to it when it was first promulgated. It was Tupou's idea to make his people dress fakapapālangi (European fashion) to prove to the outside world that Tongans were 'civilised'; Baker opposed the move because money spent on clothing meant so much less towards the mission collection.¹⁰² The scheme of forcing Tongans to buy European clothes, by prohibiting the manufacture of tapa, was conjured up by those traders whose profits were suffering from the competition of the missionaries. They put their suggestion to Captain Nares, of H.M.S. Challenger, when he visited Tonga in 1874 and Nares in turn pressed the idea on the King,

100 Cf. Gordon-Cummings, A Lady's Cruise in a French Man-of-War (Edinburgh, 1882), p.19.

101 E.g., Gordon to Derby, 29 April 1878, Lord Stanmore [Sir Arthur Gordon], Fiji Records of Private and Public Life 1875-1880 (Edinburgh, 1904), vol.III, p.113; Alfred St Johnston, Camping Among Cannibals (London, 1883), p.23.

102 Baker to Rabone, 27 December 1871, MSS and Printed Documents re Baker.

who took it up enthusiastically.¹⁰³ Baker's only connection with the matter lay in his inducing the King to introduce the measure gradually over a period of two years, and in this fashion it was incorporated in the 1875 Code.¹⁰⁴

The social and sumptuary laws were inherited by Baker from previous legislators and, as his task was merely to rephrase and codify the laws, they were included in his revised code. Nevertheless, he was made to bear the responsibility as 'the root and framer of them all',¹⁰⁵ and his connection with these ill-advised laws provided one of the excuses for Sir Arthur Gordon to have him removed from Tonga in 1879. So effective were Gordon's declarations that Baker was responsible for this 'intolerably irksome and oppressive' legislation¹⁰⁶ that even so careful an historian as Morrell has described Baker's influence on Tongan laws as 'a stifling despotism'.¹⁰⁷

Tupou, however, was immensely gratified

103 Campbell, Log Letters from the 'Challenger', p.130; Baker to Chapman, 15 November 1876, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 15.

104 Baker to Chapman, 15 November 1876, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 14.

105 Wilkinson to Gordon, 15 July 1878, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.III, p.356.

106 See below, Chapter 7.

107 Morrell, Britain in the Pacific Islands, p.329.

by his new legal code and new constitution. In June 1876 jubilee celebrations were held at Nuku'alofa to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the introduction of Christianity to Tonga. Here Tupou spoke to 3,000 persons assembled among pavilions and bunting on the mala'e:

There are many things which ought to cause rejoicing today. Tonga is still owned by the Tongese. We are not subject to any land. Remember how Fiji is lost forever to the Fijians; and in all probability Samoa too...the heathen nation has become Christian, barbarous men nearly civilised, churches and schools in all islands, a people set free, a Constitution given, laws established, Courts of justice, various offices of Government, roads all through the land, stores springing up in every place and all the adjuncts of a civilised country. I hardly feel able to express my feelings today. I feel my heart burning within me when I think what Tonga has accomplished.¹⁰⁸

Baker could justly claim a large share of the credit for these improvements of which Tupou was so proud. He had also won a deserved place in the affections of the King and the majority of Tongans. His ways may have been devious, and his motives sometimes dubious, but it would be difficult to dispute the reality of his achievements.

108 'Jubilee of the Tongan Mission', the Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 3 January 1877.

CHAPTER 7

THE END OF A MISSIONARY CAREER

TUPOU had accepted the legal and constitutional reforms of 1875 not because he saw any moral virtue in surrendering his autocratic power, nor because he believed that the fakapapālangi (white man's way) was intrinsically superior to the fakatonga (Tongan way), but because he was convinced that the only way to ensure Tonga's independence was to have it recognised by the Powers, and that the Powers would only recognise a state which could show tangible evidence of being 'civilized'. He had learned, in Oliver's phrase, 'that the only way to remain Tongan is to appear western'.¹ This assessment proved correct, and within a year of the promulgation of the constitution Germany recognised Tonga as an independent sovereign state. Similar recognition by the British government followed in 1878. For Tupou this acknowledgement of Tonga's stature was the fulfilment of a life's work, and the object which he had been striving to achieve since St Julian had advised him in 1854 that only thus could Tonga's independence be assured. Most of the credit, however, belongs to Shirley Baker, for it was he who had created the political structure which made

1 Oliver, The Pacific Islands, p.179.

possible the realisation of Tupou's aspirations; he who had publicised Tonga's new condition as a 'civilised' state; and he who had conducted, or at least initiated, the negotiations which led to the treaties of recognition.

One month after the promulgation of the constitution Baker began publishing an English language newspaper, the Tonga Times, the expressed intention of which was 'to bring the Friendly Islands more prominently before other parts of the world'. In the first editorial he wrote:

We believe that when the actual position of these islands is properly made known they will have the sympathy and admiration of all well wishers of native races, for in no other part of the world do we think there is to be found among native races the same desirable state of things as are [sic] to be seen on Tonga - that of a native race relying on its own innate strength, trying to raise itself as a Government among the nations of the earth.²

The theme was to be developed in subsequent issues.

At the same time Baker began soliciting the representatives of foreign governments, seeking treaties which would recognise Tonga. The first overtures were made to Baron Von Schleinitz, the commander of a German warship, the Gazelle, which visited Nuku'alofa in December 1875. A conference took place on the ship attended by Tupou, Baker, Von Schleinitz and Theodore Weber, and Baker

2 The Tonga Times, vol.I, no.1.

reported in the Tonga Times:

With regard to this interview we must be silent; but we believe we are at liberty in saying that the result of the visit of the man-of-war will be the acknowledgment of Tonga as a nation by the German Empire, and a treaty between Germany and Tonga.³

Similar proposals appear to have been made to E.L. Layard, the British Consul for Fiji and Tonga, who visited Tonga in February 1876. Layard, however, was unsympathetic, and Baker did not press him.⁴ When a more amenable British official, Commodore A.H. Hoskins, the officer in charge of the naval squadron on the Australian station, visited Tonga in May 1876, Baker made better progress. The Commodore was impressed with the developments he saw in Tonga and sympathetic towards Baker and his policies. He reported to the Admiralty:

I feel much sympathy with a native government struggling to become independent and sufficient to itself in a peaceful development formed on civilized usages.... The Government and Constitution of Tonga have never been officially recognised, though it has been the custom of our ships to pay the King the honour of a royal salute.... It might not

3 The original of the paper is lost. This fragment was offered in evidence by Maudslay: Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation...October 1879, p.88.

4 At least Baker discussed with Layard his plans 'to enrol Tonga in the family of nations': E.L. Layard to the Earl of Derby, 8 March 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.1.

be without its good effect in their dealings with white men if such a recognition were now officially given to them.⁵

In London Hoskins' recommendation that Tonga be formally recognised was forwarded to the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office, but was coldly received. The British Government was preparing an Order in Council creating the new office of High Commissioner for the Western Pacific and giving this officer wide jurisdiction over British subjects in 'uncivilised' Pacific Island territories. Lord Derby, of the Foreign Office, and Lord Carnarvon, of the Colonial Office, agreed that to recognise Tonga as a 'civilised' state would partly negate the usefulness of that order, and possibly hamper the High Commissioner in the exercise of his judicial functions.⁶ They therefore concurred 'as to the propriety of not recognising that Government for the present'.⁷

In the meantime, however, the request which Baker had made to Von Schleinitz in December 1875 had been received favourably in Berlin, and as a result H.I.G.M.S. Hertha arrived in Nuku'alofa in October 1876 to negotiate a treaty, which was

5 Commodore Hoskins to the Secretary to the Admiralty, 19 May 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.6, enc.

6 R.H. Meade (Colonial Office) to T.V. Lister (Foreign Office), 4 August 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.8.

7 Lister to the Secretary to the Admiralty, 14 September 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.9.

signed on 1 November 1876. Its terms guaranteed perpetual peace and friendship between Tonga and Germany, and provided guarantees of freedom of religion, trade, and travel for nationals of one party in the territory of the other, and reciprocal trading and shipping rights. In return for recognising Tonga, Germany was granted the right to establish a naval coaling station in the magnificent harbour at Vava'u, subject to the reciprocal right of Tongan warships to refuel in German ports!⁸

Baker's name appeared on the treaty only as interpreter to the Tongan plenipotentiary, 'Uiliame Tungī, but he was really the prime mover, a fact acknowledged by Germany when it offered to confer on him the decoration of Knight of the Red Eagle (3rd class) for his part in the proceedings.⁹

News of the German action caused some embarrassment in London, and in February 1877 the Colonial Office suggested to the Foreign Office:

...as complaints may be expected to arise in the Australian colonies if British subjects are not secured for commercial purposes in Tonga the treatment of the 'most favoured nation', it might be perhaps advisable that a treaty between Her Majesty and King George should be negotiated by Sir A. Gordon.¹⁰

8 Full text of treaty: F.O.C.P. 4285, no.12, enc.

9 Gordon to Chapman, 6 January 1880: Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.159.

10 R.G.W. Herbert (Colonial Office) to Lister, 8 February 1877, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.13.

The Foreign Office, however, decided that a provisional declaration securing 'most favoured nation' treatment to British subjects shipping and trade would suffice,¹¹ and Sir Arthur Gordon, who was Consul-General for the Western Pacific as well as High Commissioner and Governor of Fiji, was instructed to secure such a declaration from Tupou. To this end Gordon visited Tonga in April 1878, but found to his chagrin that the King would make no arrangements without the advice of Baker, who was absent in Sydney at the time. Gordon spent some time in discussions with the King, and became convinced that Tupou would make no concessions to Britain unless Britain also conceded formal recognition to Tonga, and that for his purposes nothing less than a formal treaty would be necessary. He wrote to Derby:

[Tupou] is anxious that the Government of Tonga should be recognised by England in the same manner that it has been by Germany, and with this wish - a very natural one on his part - it would, I think, be best to comply. Tonga has made advances in civilization, and established systems of government and legal administration which fairly entitle her to such recognition. Moreover, without some formal engagement of the nature of a treaty with the Tongan Government it will be impossible for the High Commissioner's Court to enter into the exercise of its function at all without

11 Herbert to Lister, 6 March 1877, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.13c.

dispute and, possibly, resistance on the part of the Tongan judicial authorities.¹²

Gordon's Vice-Consul and Deputy Commissioner, Alfred Maudslay, took advantage of a temporary breach between Baker and Tupou to obtain a provisional agreement in September 1878,¹³ and when the British Government finally granted permission to negotiate a treaty Gordon sailed to Tonga to conclude it. The treaty, signed on 29 November 1879, recognised Tonga and declared perpetual peace and friendship between the parties. British subjects were guaranteed 'most favoured nation' treatment and were made amenable to the High Commissioner's court for all offences except those against 'the municipal laws of Tonga not cognisable as such under British Law'.¹⁴

Thus by November 1879 Tonga had been recognised as an independent sovereign state by the two paramount powers in the Pacific, and Tupou had been given the reassurance and security he had been seeking. It was the fulfilment of his most fervent hopes, as his note to Maudslay during the early stages of the negotiations of the

12 Gordon to Derby, 27 April 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.25.

13 Maudslay to Salisbury, 30 September 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.29.

14 Gordon to Salisbury, 5 December 1880, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.90; Text of Treaty, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.96, enc.

British treaty demonstrated:

I write to you now in a spirit of joy and with peace of mind, because the thing I have so long desired is being accomplished - the making of a treaty between Britain and Tonga. The rocks and trees of this land, had they mouths would also rejoice.¹⁵

But the éminence grise who had done most to bring about this consummation was not present to witness the final act. Baker had been recalled to Sydney a few weeks before the signing of the British treaty, for while his policies had led to Tonga becoming 'a nation among the nations of the world', they had brought only disgrace and humiliation on himself.

BY the beginning of 1876 Baker seemed more secure than he had been at any time since he returned to Tonga as Chairman in 1869. His ecclesiastical reorganisation had proved successful and the results of the 1875 Jubilee Collections seemed to insure him against much interference by the Missionary Committee. The missionary staff itself had been reduced to three, of whom Watkins and Thomas could be relied upon for loyal support. Even Moulton was being conciliatory. Over the preceding year Baker had been making determined efforts to win Moulton's confidence: he had been

15 Tupou to Maudslay, 28 September 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.29, enc.2.

made a trustee of the church leases,¹⁶ and auditor of the Bank of Tonga;¹⁷ while in December 1875 Baker had supported a move to allow him to travel to England at the expense of the mission for the purpose of translating the scriptures into Tongan and seeing them through the press.¹⁸ These efforts were succeeding. In May 1875 Moulton had written: 'The folks next door [the Bakers] have been very kind and I hope the gulf is getting bridged over'.¹⁹ In August 1875 he wrote: 'Mr Baker and myself are working harmoniously in our respective spheres and helping one another where we can'.²⁰ He had even come to accept the moves towards self-government for the mission with some good grace.²¹

In political matters Baker was enjoying great success. The constitution and code of laws had just been promulgated and Tupou and apparently all Tonga looked to him with confidence, respect, and even a little adulation.

16 Lease of Wesleyan Churches and Model Deed, 15 December 1875; F.O.C.P. 5827, no.300, enc.12.

17 Koe Boobooi, vol.II, no.2, April 1875.

18 Moulton to Chapman, January 1876, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.

19 Moulton to Chapman, 17 March 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.

20 Moulton to Chapman, 31 August 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.

21 Baker to Chapman, 4 September 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

In his personal affairs Baker was also prospering. His family, by this time, numbered seven children, of whom the eldest boy, Shirley, was at Wesley College in Melbourne.²² He had acquired considerable means, for his account at the Bank of Tonga could at the same time support an investment of £1,500 in the bank,²³ a loan of £1,200 to the government,²⁴ a loan of £600 to the mission,²⁵ and an unknown number of private loans to individual Tongans. His new status demanded something more than the coconut thatch house in which he had lived since 1870, and of which Rev. W. Fletcher, commented, after a short stay as a guest there in 1873: 'we thought it might be a kindness...if...we could command the services of a hurricane and topple the whole over'.²⁶ Baker had therefore begun building a large two storied weatherboard house, the most imposing building in Tonga excepting only the King's palace.²⁷

- 22 Baker to Chapman, 6 January 1876, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.
- 23 Of the \$15,000 paid up capital of the bank, Baker provided half: Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation...October 1879, p.50.
- 24 Diary letter of D. Wilkinson, 15 July 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.4.
- 25 Baker to Chapman, 17 March 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.
- 26 The Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 1 October 1876.
- 27 The Bakers moved into their house in June 1876: Baker to Chapman, 23 June 1876, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.

To Baker then everything seemed to be going satisfactorily, and his sense of well-being was adequately expressed in a letter to Chapman in January 1876, where he wrote:

For the sake of my family I ought to leave the islands, but I feel as long as King George lives I must stay in Tonga, not because I am anxious for office, as some say, for I have impudence to think I could fight my way in the colonies, hence it is not also because I feel I could not get on - but from a conscientious conviction I am where the Lord would have me be.²⁸

Baker's security was, however, less soundly based than he imagined. His activities, and in particular his connection with the constitution and code of laws, his methods of fund raising for the Jubilee, and his diplomatic overtures to Germany, had provoked determined opposition from four separate directions: from the traders, from his missionary colleagues, from certain groups among the Tongans, and from the British Governor of Fiji, Sir Arthur Gordon. Over the next four years successive attacks from each of these quarters was to shatter his confidence, destroy his influence, and finally cause him to be recalled from Tonga with his reputation in tatters.

The first assault came from the traders, whose mounting hostility has been described earlier.

28 Baker to (?), 16 January 1876, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 15.

The reason for this opposition was basically economic: the efficiency of Baker's collecting methods diverted to the mission, and thence directly to Godeffroys, copra which the traders felt should have passed through their hands. In 1875 they had been forced to borrow money, either from Baker or from Godeffroys, to re-lend to the Tongans on collecting day. This ensured that a share of the trade passed through the hands of the small traders and that they could stay in business, but their position was precarious; they took the risks, the mission reaped most of the rewards. A further consequence of the system was that the Tongans were left with very little surplus money after making their mission contributions, and were therefore unable to buy trade goods, thus depriving the Europeans of their second important source of income. One can hardly wonder then that the whites were antagonistic, or that they viewed with suspicion the cordial relations between the mission and Godeffroys. There is little doubt that Baker gave the mission business to Godeffroys because that firm offered a demonstrably superior service,²⁹ but the whites were quick to reach other

29 Baker to Chapman, 3 May 1876, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101: 'I have supported the German firm because I have believed and known it has been in the interests of the mission to do so. They have given a higher price for mission copra than we can get elsewhere - and have taken copra I could not have disposed of elsewhere.' See also: Baker, Memoirs, p.46; Morrell, Britain in the Pacific Islands, p.320.

conclusions. They were aware that in Samoa allegations had been made that an American adventurer, Steinberger, had made an arrangement with Godeffroys to give them a monopoly on Samoan copra in return for a commission,³⁰ and they suspected that Baker had made a similar arrangement. There was even one, Robert Hanslip, a clerk in Weber's employ, who claimed to have seen a draft of such an agreement in Godeffroys office waiting to be signed by Weber and Baker.³¹

Superimposed on this situation came Baker's constitution which provided for equality between Tongans and Europeans, made Europeans amenable to Tongan courts and to the rigorous moral restrictions of the Tongan law, prevented them from buying land and made them liable to taxation. If there were any doubts about Baker's intentions he dispelled them in the first editions of the Tonga Times, published in January 1876. In the editorial he wrote:

The object we have set before us and end to be obtained is to try, by training and education, to make the Tongans a nation among nations, governed by Tongans, in fact 'Tonga for Tonga'. We trust our European friends will not be offended by these remarks... [but] we must ever remember that

30 Masterman, The Origins of International Rivalry in Samoa, p.120.

31 Maudslay to Gordon, 25 January 1879, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.24.

we are but strangers in Tonga and that the Tonguese are the only legitimate citizens of Tonga.... With regard to the land we need not remark what are our views for they are well known. We hope the day will never dawn when one inch of Tongan soil shall be alienated by purchase from the Tongans.³²

These 'impertinent remarks of the editor of the Times', Joseph Cocker reported to Layard, 'causes considerably ill feelings...and meets with that contempt it richly disserves [sic]'.³³ They were sufficient to cause the traders to put aside their mutual rivalries and unite in a common front against Baker.

The traders' opportunity came in February 1876 when E.L. Layard, the British Consul in Fiji, visited Tonga. Layard was a champion of British interests and had in the past demonstrated his partiality towards Europeans when their interests conflicted with those of the islanders.³⁴ He arrived in Tonga on 12 February,³⁵ and on 16 February twenty-two whites petitioned him to appoint to Tonga a British consul 'who would make a stand

32 The Tonga Times, vol.I, no.1, 22 January 1876 (a copy in F.O. 58, vol.150).

33 Cocker to Layard, 29 March 1876, F3/43, set 2.

34 Deryck Scarr, 'John Bates Thurston, Commodore J.G. Goodenough, and Rampant Anglo-Saxons in Fiji', Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand, November 1964, pp.361-82.

35 Layard to Derby, 8 March 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.1.

against the overweening influence of the missionaries which is rampant here'.³⁶

Layard was very sympathetic towards the complaints of the beach. He had heard in Samoa and Fiji some extraordinary stories of Baker's activities, which predisposed him to accept the accounts given by the whites in Tonga. He sought verification of the trader's statements from Moulton, whose reconciliation with Baker had been languishing since Moulton had refused to hold Jubilee collections at the College at the end of 1875.³⁷ Moulton endorsed the traders' criticisms, and Layard returned to Fiji convinced that the complaints and accusations made against Baker were genuine. He had no authority to take direct action against Baker, but in March he wrote a long dispatch to the Foreign Office listing many grave charges against him. Baker, he claimed, ruled Tupou completely:

The old king is at least 76 years of age and though of vigorous intellect...is entirely subservient to Mr Baker's influence. I was informed that Mr Baker had, on some occasion, saved his life by his medical skill; and this, together with his spiritual supremacy as his religious instructor, has given him his hold over the old man's mind. He will do

36 Foreign Residents in Tonga to Layard, 16 February 1876, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General) - 148/1883.

37 Baker to Chapman, 3 May 1876, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

nothing without Mr Baker's consent, and as the Chiefs, whether in or out of Council, are subservient to the King, it followed that Mr Baker is virtually ruler of Tonga.³⁸

This power, Layard reported, Baker used 'entirely for his own aggrandisement and enrichment and to the detriment and (if possible) banishment of every white man, except his own special party, from the islands'. In the first place he had conspired with the German firm to give them a monopoly of Tongan copra, in return for a commission; Baker was, he claimed:

a trader in disguise, and in league with the firm of Messrs Godeffroy Brothers of Hamburg, in whose favour he obtains (or makes) concessions of every kind, and into whose stores he diverts the streams of copra poured into the mission treasury, receiving a percentage on the same for himself.³⁹

Secondly, Baker had used his influence to prevent the appointment of a properly qualified medical practitioner to the Government service in Tonga, even though the whites had guaranteed £50 per annum towards his salary. He had done this, Layard claimed, because he sought to retain for himself the emoluments of the office, which provided one of the most lucrative sources of his private income. Layard asserted:

38 Layard to Derby, 8 March 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.1.

39 Ibid.

Mr Baker refuses to administer a dose of epsom salts without his fee of a dollar and a half...on one occasion when an unfortunate native blew his hand off and was bleeding to death from severed arteries he actually declined to attend him until five dollars were given as a fee.... I myself saw a receipt for £10 for medical attendance (and medicine) on a European.⁴⁰

Layard was also very critical of Baker's political activities and the organisation he had created. Constitutional government in Tonga was, he declared, 'a farce', the judiciary was 'ex parte' and the decisions of the courts 'often most amusingly illogical'. He was equally critical of Baker's legislation. He reported that the alteration of the inheritance law which removed from the succession Ma'afu (whom he described as 'the King's...legitimate successor') in favour of 'Unga (whom he described as 'illegitimate', 'treacherous' and 'untrustworthy') was an act that would cause 'a storm to burst over the Group on the death of the old King'. The reason for this change, Layard claimed, was that 'Unga was subservient to Baker, while Ma'afu was 'known to have a will of his own and not to be friendly to missionary domination'.⁴¹

He reported that the new forms of leasehold which Baker had drawn up were 'couched in such language that a dishonest landlord might procure the

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

forfeiture of any lease by a little trickery'.⁴²

Attention was also drawn to the sumptuary law prohibiting the manufacture of tapa. This, Layard claimed, was an 'oppressive act', intended solely to increase the profits of Godeffroys by forcing the Tongans to buy the cotton cloth they imported.

Layard's most bitter criticisms were levelled at Baker's missionary pursuits. He reported that Baker had resettled the whole population of 'Ata (Pylstaart) on 'Eua, because it incommoded him to travel to the former island to supervise them. His major criticism, however, was concerned with the missionary collections. He described in detail the manner in which Baker extracted money from his congregations, his blandishments, the stimulus he provided by lending money at the church door, and above all the iniquities of the sivi, Baker's most successful method of fund raising. Through these knavish means, he reported, Baker had obtained £17,000 from his flock in 1875. He concluded: 'One's ears ring with the denunciation, "My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves"'.⁴³

There was more than a grain of truth in many of Layard's charges, but there was also much that was mendacious. Baker did wield great influence, but solely because his advice was given only when it

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

was sought, and when given was shrewd, sound and cogent, and consistent with Tupou's aspirations. When Moulton, who possessed the same sacerdotal authority as Baker, gratuitously offered the King advice, it was ignored.⁴⁴

It was true that Baker sold the mission copra to Godeffroys, but the only evidence that he received a commission on it is the unsworn testimony of Robert Hanslip, one of the least reliable of the whites. On the other hand Weber, perhaps not altogether impartial, and Thomas Trood, the Godeffroy factor at Nuku'alofa but described by Maudslay as 'most thoroughly honourable and straightforward',⁴⁵ swore affidavits that no agreement existed between Baker and Godeffroy and Son.⁴⁶ There is also corroborative evidence to support their statements. In March 1875, for instance, Godeffroys detained their vessel, the Samoa, for a considerable time in Nuku'alofa to allow two mission families to come aboard, and then transported them to Sydney, all without charge.⁴⁷

44 J.P. Miller, on behalf of Tupou to (?), 4 January 1877, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 14.

45 Maudslay to Gordon, 30 September 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.16.

46 Affidavit of T. Weber, 7 March 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.15, enc.3; statement of Thos. Trood, 11 December 1878: 'Minutes of Friendly Islands District Meeting, 12 December 1878', Friendly Islands District Meeting Minute Book, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

47 Baker to Chapman, 15 March 1875, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

This, and other favours, were performed by Godeffroys to retain the mission's goodwill, hardly necessary if Baker were a paid operative. Furthermore, there was no need for Godeffroys to pay Baker, for the mission could not dispose of its copra other than through the German firm, and ordinary business principles would prevent Weber paying Baker for produce which would come to him anyway.

With regard to Layard's claims about Baker's unethical behaviour as a physician, it seems clear that while Baker probably did use his influence to dissuade the King from employing a properly trained doctor, and while he probably did enjoy a substantial income from his own doctoring of Tongans, the examples of his avarice cited by Layard were pure fabrication. Baker had accepted £10 for treating W.C. Young for a venereal infection, but only when this was pressed upon him by Trood, who considered it was 'absurd to treat Europeans without charging', as was Baker's normal custom.⁴⁸ The traders collected the money among themselves, pressed it upon Baker, received a receipt, and then with rather transparent guile offered it to Layard as evidence of Baker's cupidity. Similarly, the story of Baker's refusing to treat the boy whose hand had been blown off until he was paid his fee is bogus. An affidavit by Sione Fetokai, the father of the boy concerned, reveals

48 Trood to Baker, 26 February 1876; Trood to Baker, 1 March 1876; Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 14.

that Baker neither asked for, nor was paid, anything for attending his son. The boy was given \$10 by a German trader, but he kept it for himself.⁴⁹

Similarly, Layard's criticisms of Baker's political activities included many misrepresentations. It is curious that Baker should have been blamed for the prohibition on tapa-making for, as has been pointed out earlier, this measure had been adopted at the request of the traders, and had been included in the new Code only on Tupou's insistence, and even then in a modified form. Baker described his attitude to the matter in May 1876:

The King is determined to do away with it and it is through my councils that a medium course has been pursued.... I believe in it being done away with, but gradually.⁵⁰

Perhaps the most absurd item in Layard's report concerned the 'Ata people, who had been moved to 'Eua by Tupou in 1865. The reason for the move, however, had not been missionary convenience, but the ravages of Peruvian slave raiders upon this isolated community.⁵¹

Layard had been on somewhat safer ground when he criticised Baker's methods of fund raising, but even this was misrepresented. The 1875 collection

49 Statement of Sione Fetokai, 6 October 1876, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 14.

50 Baker to Chapman, 6 May 1876, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

51 Missionary Notices, October 1865, p.527, letter from Whewell dated 10 July 1865.

amounted to about £15,000, not £17,000 as Layard claimed, and this was an extraordinary collection connected with the Jubilee of the mission.⁵² To report the frenzied collecting which characterised that occasion as if it were normal practice was less than just.

It was because of the patent falsehoods in Layard's charges that Baker was able to ride out the storm. On receipt of the despatch from Layard the Colonial Office, on the advice of the Foreign Office, communicated the substance of the charges to the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London,⁵³ which in turn sought an explanation from the Australian body. Chapman, the mission secretary in Sydney, informed Baker of the charges and demanded that he reply to them.⁵⁴

Baker had been aware that strictures had been made upon his conduct, for at the end of February 1876 Weber visited Tonga and learned the general nature of the complaints from several German traders who had been party to the petition to Layard. Weber apparently informed Baker of the complaints

52 Chapman to the Secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, 17 March 1877, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.15, enc.2.

53 Draft of a letter to the Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, London, June 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.5, enc.

54 G.T. Perks, Secretary, Wesleyan Missionary Society to Earl of Carnarvon, 11 August 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.8, enc.

that had been made, and clearly outlined his own attitude in a note to him:

All the foreigners in these islands are in every regard largely indebted to your exertions, and also the Tongans, whose welfare and progress is owing to a great measure to your zealous endeavours on their behalf, and it must be sincerely regretted that the late unjust proceedings took place at all.⁵⁵

Under Weber's influence all the Germans involved in the petition retracted, and Weber informed Layard that the Germans, who were 'the majority of foreign residents in Tonga...disagree entirely with the memorial'.⁵⁶

Although Baker was thus forewarned of the complaints made about him, he could not, of course, know the specific charges which Layard would prefer. For several months he could only fulminate generally on the nature of his opposition. Early in May 1876 he wrote to Chapman:

The Europeans want to have native women and drink ad libitum, and because they cannot get it I am maligned, for I am not afraid to speak of their doings and warn the natives against such vices.⁵⁷

A little later he added:

Whilst I am here no one shall stop my tongue in declaiming against the vices of the Europeans,

55 Weber to Baker, 29 February 1876, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 14.

56 Weber to Layard, 29 February 1876, F3/43, no.2.

57 Baker to Chapman, 3 May 1876, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

their brothels, their grog shops which are decimating the natives. Other speak, I know, but do nothing. I both speak and do, and will do all in my power to counteract the grog-selling to the natives. I know I am hated by many an European, let him hate me he knows I am justified and what is the goodwill or otherwise of evil men.⁵⁸

He was particularly bitter about Moulton, who had sided with the traders, and he wrote in June 1876:

There would have been nothing had it not been for Mr Moulton, but as he was, so he is, and ever will be - alas that I should be the obstacle in his way of making a name.⁵⁹

In September 1876, however, he finally received Chapman's letter informing him of the precise charges made by Layard. His immediate reactions were summed up in a note which he sent to Chapman soon after:

I cannot trust my feelings in reference to it now - so disgusted am I - when I see so many names on it who owe their lives to me - others whom I have cured, and some actually doctoring when they signed it for venereal disease - others again who are living in open concubinage, some with other men's wives.... W. Parker who drew out the petition and signed it is a Roman Catholic....⁶⁰

But with the full text of the strictures before him he was able to answer the charges directly, a task

58 Baker to Chapman, 23 June 1876, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS; set 197, item 2.

59 Ibid.

60 Baker to Chapman, 14 September 1876, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.

made easier by the many false and scurrilous statements which Layard had included in his report. In October 1876 Baker wrote his reply on twenty seven pages of closely written foolscap.⁶¹ It dealt with the accusations seriatim. With regard to his political influence he denied that he did anything other than give advice when it was asked for, and included a letter from Tupou testifying to that effect. The King wrote:

I do not know the least thing in which Mr Baker has usurped my power or has overruled me. It is true I often ask him what is his mind with reference to certain arrangements I make, but he has never in anything overruled me in my Government.⁶²

Concerning the subject of the supposed connections with Godeffroys Baker made the most positive denials, and forwarded a sworn affidavit from Weber in support. Weber stated:

I...solemnly declare and state without any reservation upon my honour and conscience that the Rev. S.W. Baker is not receiving, and has never received in any way whatever, neither from the said J.C. Godeffroy & Sons, nor from myself, nor from any of their representatives, directly or indirectly, any commission, gratification, present or any other like consideration of any description whatsoever, that the said Rev. S.W. Baker never has even in the remotest intimated any request to any such

61 Consul Layard's Despatch and the Rev. S.W. Baker's reply to the same, 21 October 1876, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 14.

62 Ibid. (enclosure).

effect, and that he has neither ever been offered anything of the kind.⁶³

Which should have been emphatic enough to convince the Foreign Office; either Baker was innocent or the German Consul-General was a consummate liar.

Many of the other charges levelled by Layard were equally easy to discredit. Baker denied that he had influenced the King over the appointment of a doctor. Concerning the income from his own medical practice he wrote:

My bills for medicine, as the Committee well knows, have often in fact very often amounted to more than one fourth of my salary, and though sometimes I have received money in payment yet I have never asked for it...and never has it amounted in all to but a small fraction of what the medicines have cost me...though in some instances I have ridden or driven miles, yet to this moment I have not ever received a letter of thanks, much less payment, from Mr Layard's Europeans.⁶⁴

Concerning the tapa prohibition, Baker forwarded a letter from Tupou showing that this law was made on the King's insistence, and that Baker had used his influence to modify it. Regarding the complaints about the new leases, Baker explained that the forms of lease had been drawn up by the King's lawyers in Sydney, not by Baker, and that, being transferable, they offered considerable advantages to the Europeans over the old leases. On the removal of the 'Ata

63 Ibid. (enclosure).

64 Ibid.

people, Baker pointed out that this had been arranged several years earlier, and that he was not responsible. With reference to the law of succession, he denied that he had influenced the King to favour 'Unga, and asserted that the new arrangements were made at Tupou's own wish and instigation. Moreover, he wrote:

As to Unga being subservient to Mr Baker or any other missionary makes one smile. Unga has always been most distant with the missionaries and also Mr Baker and it has only been within the last few weeks that he has even been a member of the Church. As to Maafu having a will of his own, he is, and always has been, more friendly to the missionaries than Unga.⁶⁵

Having disposed of the simpler matters, Baker turned his attention to the more difficult task of explaining away the 1875 collections. He explained:

£1,400 odd was the amount raised for Jubilees, Foreign and Home Missions, but certainly if we include all the Native-Minister's stipends and amounts raised for Chapels etc., it would not be far off £17,000, but when Mr Layard is informed that of the amount £4,000 only was forwarded to the Missionary Committee, and again out of that the European Missionaries are supported and the expenses of the John Wesley paid, whereas the balance of the £17,000 is spent, or to be spent in Tonga, and that by the Native Financial District Meeting, I don't think he need wonder at their liberality to themselves.⁶⁶

Concerning the methods of collection, Baker admitted

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

that Layard's account was substantially correct, though 'rather over-coloured'. He protested, however, that the methods used were 'not the arrangement of the Missionaries, but the natives own doing...to raise money for their own Church purposes'.

He concluded:

Mr Layard's whole despatch is a most garbled statement containing in part the grossest falsehoods. It is no excuse for Mr Layard to say he was informed so - a person in Mr Layard's position, though he may choose to associate with beachcombers, yet he has no right to repeat their gossip without first ascertaining its truth, if he does so he must not be grieved in being classed with them, or in his own words as a most 'unscrupulous, irresponsible person'.⁶⁷

Baker's refutation was not sent to London, but the main points were included in a letter from Benjamin Chapman to the parent society defending the Australian body's management of the mission in Tonga. His letter concluded:

We hope that his reply to the charges contained in the despatch will be to you as satisfactory as it appears to us.⁶⁸

By the time Chapman's letter, forwarded by Dr Punshon of the London office of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, reached the Colonial Office, support for Baker had been forthcoming from other sources.

67 Ibid.

68 Chapman to the Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, 17 March 1877, F.O.C.P., 4285, no.15, enc.2.

Commodore Hoskins had visited Tonga soon after Layard, and his report, forwarded to the Colonial Office by the Admiralty, contradicted much of Layard's despatch. According to Hoskins Tupou was no cipher in Baker's hands:

The King has very great influence and prestige with his people; he appears to preserve an independent authority, and, though counselled and influenced by the Wesleyan Missionaries, to be by no means entirely in their hands.⁶⁹

Furthermore the alterations made to the laws and to the system of government were, in his opinion, 'judicious and sensible', and the assistance and advice of the missionaries 'exerted for good ends'.

These comments were plainly incompatible with Layard's statements. The discomfiture of the Colonial Office was increased on the receipt of a despatch from Sir Arthur Gordon commenting on the affair. Gordon, who as well as being Governor of Fiji was also High Commissioner and Consul-General for the Western Pacific, had taken over Layard's functions, and the latter, before leaving Fiji for his new post of consul in Noumea, had given Gordon a copy of the charges against Baker. In October 1876, which significantly was just prior to the announcement of the treaty between Germany and Tonga,⁷⁰ Gordon

69 Commodore Hoskins to the Secretary of the Admiralty, 19 May 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.6, enc.

70 Gordon's attitude to the circumstances changed markedly after the German influence in Tonga became apparent.

wrote to the Colonial Office drawing attention to several inaccuracies and inconsistencies in Layard's despatch, and expressing doubt as to the impartiality of his informants and the plausibility of their accusations.⁷¹ Faced with this rebutting evidence Carnarvon, of the Colonial Office, concluded that Layard's charges 'were based upon inaccurate reports, to which a less ready credence should have been attached',⁷² and Derby, of the Foreign Office, sensible of having stirred up a hornets' nest, resolved 'to not make any further communication upon the subject to the Wesleyan Society'.⁷³

Baker had survived the first determined threat to unseat him, but even before this was apparent he was facing a second assault, this time from his missionary colleagues. He had always displayed a certain high-handedness towards the other missionaries, and the tendency had been encouraged by his growing power and influence. By 1875 he had come to look upon himself as a 'bishop',⁷⁴ with wider powers and more

71 Gordon to the Earl of Carnarvon, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 16 October 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.15, enc.4.

72 Herbert to Lister, 19 July 1877, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.15.

73 Lister to Herbert, 8 February 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.22.

74 Baker to Chapman, 14 May 1874, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101: 'My opinion is they [the Native Ministers] will never be able to do without European oversight, may I be permitted to say European Bishops'.

exalted station than the doctrines of Wesley strictly allowed, and among the close-knit and isolated band of missionaries, where small differences loomed large, and frustrations found few outlets, it was natural that this attitude should arouse resentment. Layard's inquiries provided the catalyst that set this resentment working.

By 1876 there were four missionaries in Tonga: Baker, Moulton, Watkins, and Thomas. Between Baker and Moulton there was an antipathy of long standing, although a partial reconciliation had been effected in 1875. Under Layard's promptings, however, the old discord was revived, and relations between the two returned to normal: a state of open hostility. Watkin, on the other hand, had always supported Baker but, by the beginning of 1876, he too had begun to waver. The occasion was Baker's growing political power and especially his contribution to the constitution and laws of 1875. In January 1876 Watkin wrote:

You will have heard 'ere this of the Constitution which has been set up - it will look or sound well from a distance; the affair to my mind has been altogether too hurried; ...I think our chairman has gone a little too far in the affair.⁷⁵

In February he reported:

...people are talking, and I cannot [but?] say that I don't think Mr Baker is acting in the

75 Watkin to Chapman, 12 January 1876, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.

most judicious manner...what with ecclesiastical alterations and political changes he is almost getting out of his depth. I have always stood by the chairman in his previous difficulties, but I must say that he seems to me to be laying himself open to remark.⁷⁶

He was still of the same mind several months later, for in June he complained:

I am sorry the Chairman did not consult the Brethren when he was preparing his Constitution for the Tonguese. I think (without pretending to possess a tithe of the Chairman's knowledge) we might have made a few suggestions which might perhaps have been of a little use - at any rate he might have given me an idea of what he was preparing.⁷⁷

Towards the end of 1876 Moulton visited Ha'apai, and stayed for a few weeks as Watkin's guest. Baker later claimed that Moulton used this opportunity to influence Watkin against him,⁷⁸ and this was probably the case: certainly by December 1876 Watkin was supporting Moulton and opposing the Chairman.

The most determined opposition, however, came from Thomas, the missionary at Vava'u. Prior to the District Meeting of December 1875 Thomas had

76 Watkin to Chapman, 2 February 1876, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.

77 Watkin to Chapman, 10 June 1876, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.

78 Baker to Chapman, 16 January 1877, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 15.

been a loyal supporter of Baker,⁷⁹ but at that meeting his application to return to Sydney had been refused by the Chairman on the grounds that no replacement was available.⁸⁰ Thomas' wife was pregnant, and his natural anxiety over this was increased by his isolation at Vava'u and the lack of any proper medical advice. This state of affairs was reported by Baker in January 1876.

He wrote:

Thomas will not remain the year out. He has got unhinged...he believes his wife has all kinds of imaginable diseases.⁸¹

As a result of Baker's refusal to allow Thomas to 'go up', the latter conceived a deep antagonism towards his Chairman, and thus, when Layard visited Vava'u in February 1876, he found

79 Minutes of the Friendly Islands District Meeting in Zion Church Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 11 December 1876, Friendly Islands District Meeting Minute Book, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa. Baker's reply to Thomas' charges: 'Until last D.M. he [Thomas] praised up all I have done for Tonga, whether the Govt. or otherwise, was glad that the islands has such a person as myself, instance his joy at my arrival at Vavau during a time when Mr Weber was carrying things with a high hand - rejoiced to see how a poor Missy. could make even a German Consul eat humble pie, said as long as he was in the islands would support all I did for Tonga, and much more to the same purpose.

80 Ibid.

81 Baker to Chapman, 7 January 1876, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 22.

Thomas ready to confirm the most damaging allegations about him.⁸² When a short time later Baker sought to move Joel Nau, one of Thomas' Tongan ministers, to 'Eua in order to strengthen his own circuit, Thomas withheld the letter for six weeks, and when finally Baker sent a messenger to collect Joel, Thomas wrote to the President of Conference complaining of victimization.⁸³ Finally, Thomas began attacking Baker's policies publicly, and told an audience in Vava'u that while Baker's slogan was 'Tonga for Tonga', his (Thomas') was 'Tonga for Britain'; that he hoped Britain would soon annex Tonga; and that if he remained in the group he would work for that end.⁸⁴ Nothing could have aroused Tupou's indignation more effectively, and Thomas left Tonga in January 1877, with a warning that if he ever came back he would be arraigned on a treason charge.⁸⁵ Before he left, however, he charged Baker before the December 1876 District Meeting with 'meddling in the politics of Tonga', with 'overthrowing the former laws of Tonga' and with being 'virtually King'.

82 Layard to Derby, 17 January 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.19.

83 Minutes of the Friendly Islands District Meeting in Zion Church Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 11 December 1876, Friendly Islands District Meeting Minute Book, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

84 Ibid.; also 'Unga to Chapman, 4 January 1877, M.O.M.C., set 169.

85 'Unga to Chapman, 4 January 1877, M.O.M.C., set 169.

Moulton and Watkin supported Thomas and the meeting resolved that Baker's actions were: 'opposed to the Instructions to Missionaries, [and] calculated to produce discord among the Brethren and to injure the work of God'. The matter was referred to Conference, which was to convene in January 1877.⁸⁶

Baker had no wish to appear before Conference so soon after the disturbance caused by Layard's complaints, so he excused himself on the grounds that he could not leave the King, who was seriously ill with an abscess on the scrotum.⁸⁷ During 1877 he sought to have the charges dismissed. He described Thomas as 'a young man, green from his market garden without hardly any education',⁸⁸ and his charges as 'a lot of frivolous nonsense which any schoolboy ought to be ashamed to put to paper'.⁸⁹ From Ebenezer Fox, Thomas' successor in Vava'u, he obtained very damaging evidence of Thomas' maladministration and misappropriation of funds in Vava'u, and forwarded

86 Minutes of the Friendly Islands District Meeting in Zion Church Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 11 December 1876, Friendly Islands District Meeting Minute Book, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

87 Baker to Chapman, 16 January 1877, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 15.

88 Ibid.

89 Baker to Chapman, 23 May 1877, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.

it to the Committee,⁹⁰ and from the King he obtained a declaration that if the charges against him were pursued it would be 'tantamount to admitting that your missionaries are in fact agents of your Empire for the acquisition of territories'.⁹¹ The Committee, however, was obdurate and insisted that Baker appear at the January 1878 Conference to answer Thomas' charges.

Accordingly, Baker journeyed to Sydney and attended the Conference, which examined the charges against him in closed session. As a result he was reappointed Chairman of the Tonga District and his right to give assistance to the King was confirmed, though not without reservations. The Conference resolved:

This Conference would express its opinion that the missionaries may give advice in private to the Government of the Country when asked to do so, or interpret, when requested to act in that capacity; but we must urge upon them to abstain from unnecessary interference with the politics of the country in which they reside.⁹²

But behind the closed doors Baker was evidently severely criticised. When he returned to Tonga the newly appointed British Consul remarked:

90 Ebenezer Fox to Baker, n.d., M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101; Baker to Chapman, 7 March 1877, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101.

91 'Unga to Chapman, 4 January 1877, M.O.M.C., set 169.

92 Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation...October 1879, p.31.

...although the Conference whitewashed him publicly I fancy he caught it in private, and is by no means as firm as he used to be.⁹³

In fact Baker's confidence was so badly shaken that he had decided to resign, and in July, shortly after his return to Tonga, he advised Chapman that as soon as he had made proper provision for his current ventures, the Ladies' College and the Industrial School, he would retire from the mission field. He added:

As long as I felt yourself, together with the President and others whose opinions I esteem had confidence in me I did not care what I had to go through or what I had to suffer... I feel I no longer have that confidence...I have worked hard, done my utmost for the Mission cause, but I have never worked to get the praise of men, but of my Master, had I tried to get the thanks of the fathers and brethren then I must confess I have most singularly failed.⁹⁴

Baker was not to be permitted to effect so gentle and honourable a disengagement. Even while he was discussing his resignation, the British High Commissioner and Consul-General for the Western Pacific, Sir Arthur Gordon, was working to dislodge him from his high estate and have him removed from Tonga. Gordon's opposition evidently resulted from Baker's flirtation with Germany, as a

93 Maudslay to Gordon, 8 August 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.1.

94 Baker to Chapman, 13 July 1878, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.

result of which German influence in Tonga was steadily increasing. It was not that Gordon sought British annexation of Tonga, for when New Zealand's Sir George Grey suggested annexation, Gordon protested that 'it would be scandalous to interfere' with Tonga's independence.⁹⁵ Moreover it was owing to Gordon's offices that Britain formally recognised Tonga's independence by treaty. However, Gordon did seek a preponderating British influence in Tonga, which he felt was essential to safeguard the British position in Fiji.⁹⁶ In Gordon's view there were three 'facts' which made it necessary for Britain to have special privileges in Tonga:

The first is the geographical fact that several of the islands of the Fijian Group are actually nearer to Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga, than they are to Levuka, the capital of Fiji.

The second is the ethnographical fact that the eastern part of Fiji is to a great extent peopled by Tongan emigrants, many, if not most of whom are still Tongan subjects, and that

95 D.A. Scarr, Policy and Practice in the Western Pacific (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, A.N.U., 1965), p.95, quoting as source: Gordon to C.O., 27 May 1879, C.O. 225, vol.4, referring to Grey's memorandum of 5 March 1879, Prendergast to C.O., 20 March 1879, C.O. 298, vol.238, enc.

96 Gordon was evidently considering protectorate status for Tonga. Maudslay wrote to him in 1879 'I wish you could come to some understanding about a protectorate for Tonga if Ma'afu succeeds. I think there is a way of making it acceptable to him': Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.III, p.541, Maudslay to Gordon, 4 March 1879.

almost all the powerful families of Tonga and Fiji are closely connected by descent and intermarriage.

The third is the political fact that the governing power of Tonga, owing to the above causes, exercises a wide and powerful influence within the Fiji Group.⁹⁷

The home authorities confirmed Gordon's view of the situation, and Gordon was instructed by the Colonial Office!

...to impress upon the King of Tonga, that, as his country is affected by the interests of Great Britain more largely and more intimately than by the interests of any other country, Her Majesty's Government, while deprecating any desire to gain exclusive privileges in Tonga, consider that he should be prepared to listen to their wishes, as expressed through you, with especial favour.⁹⁸

Since November 1876, however, it was the wishes of the German Government to which Tupou seemed to be listening with special favour. Germany had been granted a naval coaling station in Vava'u by the treaty through which she recognised Tonga. Shortly afterwards the management of Tonga's commercial affairs in Australia was put in the hands of Ludwig Sahl, the German Consul in Sydney,⁹⁹ and, in September 1877, the Tongan Government sought an

97 Gordon to Lister, 6 June 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.68.

98 Pauncefote to Gordon, 4 July 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.78.

99 Statement of 'Unga: Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation...October 1879, p.55.

exequatur for Sahl to act as Tongan Consul in New South Wales.¹⁰⁰ These indications of the growing influence of Germany in Tongan affairs were deeply disturbing to Gordon. When he discussed the matter with the Marquis of Salisbury in 1879, Salisbury advised him:

We should do all we can to keep the Germans off Tonga.... The real remedy is to increase your own power there. Political nature abhors a vacuum. If we leave any room in the heart of Tonga for a second affection, Messrs Godeffroy will fill it.¹⁰¹

Evidently Gordon had come to the same conclusion eighteen months earlier, and his visit to Tonga in April 1878 was intended as the first step in a campaign to replace German influence in Tonga with his own. Gordon found, however, that the position of adviser to Tupou was already filled. The King listened politely to his advice, but refused to consider Gordon's proposed convention between Tonga and Britain without consulting Baker, who was absent in Sydney at the time, answering Thomas' charges before Conference.¹⁰² Gordon evidently

100 The Secretary to the Government of Tonga to Sir H. Robinson, 24 September 1877, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.18, enc.2.

101 Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.III, p.315, Salisbury to Gordon, 13 June 1879.

102 Gordon had received the draft of an agreement to be negotiated with Tupou, and 'instructions to get it signed at once' (Herbert to Lister, 7 March 1877, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.13c), yet he failed to negotiate this agreement on his visit in April 1878. It must be assumed that the reason for Tupou's reluctance to sign Gordon's document was Baker's absence.

concluded that the impediment in his path was the obtrusive missionary, whose relations with Tupou he likened to those 'between Louis XIII and Richelieu',¹⁰³ and that before he could improve his own position in Tonga, a necessary gambit was Baker's removal. Any scruples Gordon might have had about taking such a step were overcome by the distaste he felt for Baker's activities, the evidences of which were everywhere to be seen.

Baker's policies in Tonga were the anti-thesis of Gordon's ideals. Baker was a missionary, and accepted without hesitation the axiom that a missionary's task was to 'alter' and 'improve' the people among whom he worked. To Baker, as to most missionaries, the model for personal behaviour was the earnest, non-conformist Englishman, while the model of enlightened government was British parliamentary democracy; he had tried to reconstruct Tongan society to conform to these criteria, his efforts being embodied in the constitution and the code of 1875. Gordon, on the other hand, was an advocate of 'indirect rule', and was entirely opposed to the missionary objects of 'progress' and 'improvement'. He believed that the only way to maintain native vigour and self-respect was to retain, with as little alteration as possible, native customs, social and political institutions, and patterns of authority. He had written:

103 Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.III, p.100.

It is manifest that the more native policy is retained, native agency employed, and change avoided until naturally and spontaneously called for, the less likely are these results [loss of self respect, industry and vigour] to follow. Most of all it is essential to abstain from seeking hastily to replace native institutions by unreal imitations of European models.¹⁰⁴

His policy in Fiji was based upon these principles.¹⁰⁵

Gordon's opinions on the proper way of governing native peoples were expounded with great confidence, even with a ring of pontifical authority; yet it does not necessarily follow that, in the case of Tonga, his views were sound. Given the very imperfect state of knowledge in the fields of anthropology and psychology during the nineteenth century, it might well be that the missionaries' ignorance was less harmful than Gordon's wisdom, and that Baker's spur was a more effective means of maintaining the real integrity of a society than Gordon's bridle. Watkin thought so at the time. He wrote:

Well after all our misdoings in the Friendly Islands, I think the Friendly Islanders will not suffer in any way, socially, politically or pecuniarily by comparison with the Fijians who are under the wise and benign treatment of Sir Arthur Gordon...with all our mistakes

104 Legge, Britain in Fiji, p.204, quoting Gordon, 'Native Councils in Fiji 1875-80', in Contemporary Review, 1883, vol.XLIII, p.711.

105 Legge, Britain in Fiji, chapters IX and X, passim.

I say that the Friendly Islanders are in as good a state as any other natives in the South Pacific.¹⁰⁶

The modern observer, noting that of all the island polities in the Pacific, only Tonga managed to maintain its independence and to keep the control of its affairs in its own hands, is inclined to agree.

Gordon, however, viewed with repugnance the changes Baker had wrought. The best that he could say of Nuku'alofa was: 'it somewhat resembles a small colonial or American watering place'; of the population: 'they wear chiefly European clothes and ape, more or less successfully, European manners'; and of the law courts: 'they were less defective than I had anticipated'.¹⁰⁷ Baker's constitution and Code were dealt with much more harshly, especially the sumptuary laws which had been included in the Code. These, in Gordon's opinion were 'singularly harsh and impolitic' and 'had been pressed with inconsiderate haste and enforced with inconsiderate rigour'. Gordon listed what he considered were the 'capital errors' which 'tainted' Baker's legislation:

1. Pecuniary penalties appear to be regarded rather as a source of revenue than as an instrument to deter from the commission of offences, and, accordingly multitudes of

106 Watkin to Chapman, 21 April 1879, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 9.

107 Gordon to Derby, 29 April 1878, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.III, p.113.

acts, perfectly innocent in themselves are made illegal with a view to the collection of fines from those who break the regulations...

2. It is considered possible and expedient to regulate by minute sumptuary laws matters of dress, habits, etc. which should be left to individual choice, modified only by the influence of custom and public opinion.

3. The wealth and prosperity of a country are apparently thought to consist in the amount, not of its products, but of its imports, and every means is taken to encourage the importation of foreign goods, and to discourage, if not prescribe by vexatious legislation the prosecution of any native industries.

4. There is also a desire to go too fast, and to imitate European habits, laws, and modes of administration before they are understood. It is not understood that the adoption of a statute is insufficient to ensure its successful working if it be one which those brought under its operation do not understand and are unprepared to receive. Legislation, therefore, no doubt intended to benefit the body of the people, has in many cases produced an exactly opposite result and works in a manner which is felt to be, and really is, intolerably irksome and oppressive.¹⁰⁸

Gordon gave Tupou the benefit of his views before leaving Tonga, and the King promised that at the forthcoming Parliament the 'capital errors' of which he complained would be rectified.¹⁰⁹ Gordon also wrote to Baker on the same subject,¹¹⁰ and in

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

110 Gordon to Baker, 13 April 1878, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 9.

answer received Baker's assurance that he (Baker) was not responsible for many laws which Gordon criticised.

Baker wrote:

With regard to the various charges made of late years in Tonga, there are some, though placed to my credit, yet nevertheless have been opposed by myself both in private and public.¹¹¹

Had Gordon's only concern been to protect Tongans against oppressive legislation, then his task was successfully completed. Baker was anxious to please, and the King had promised to review the laws. Yet even after these assurances Gordon continued to engineer moves against Baker designed to destroy his influence and bring about his recall. This confirms the view that Gordon was opposing Baker not merely because his laws were objectionable, but mainly because his continued presence in Tonga was incompatible with Gordon's wider political ambitions.

Gordon opened his campaign against Baker as soon as he returned to Fiji from his abortive visit to Tonga. His first action was to write a critical report on Baker's activities for Derby, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.¹¹² The text of this report was then apparently leaked to the press, for on 8 May 1878 the Fiji Times carried

111 Baker to Gordon, 26 June 1878, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 15.

112 Gordon to Derby, 29 April 1879, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.III, p.113.

an article on the Governor's visit to Tonga which quoted verbatim the criticisms made in Gordon's official despatch. When Langham, the Chairman of the Wesleyan Mission in Fiji, protested that a full inquiry had been made into Baker's activities by the recent Conference, and that as a result of that investigation it was evident that the Governor's strictures were unfounded, Gordon warned Langham that Baker would have to be removed from Tonga, otherwise he (Gordon) 'would take further action'.¹¹³ Then, in July, Gordon returned to England on leave, calling at Sydney on the way. The purpose of his stay in Sydney is revealed in his journal:

I was of course very busy all the time seeing people, especially Dr Chapman and Dr Smith, the heads of the Wesleyan body in N.S.W., and sought to persuade them of the iniquity of Mr Baker's ways, but they are dull of hearing.¹¹⁴

Gordon also decided to keep a permanent representative in Tonga, and to this end sent Alfred Maudslay to Nuku'alofa in June to act as H.B.M.'s Deputy-Commissioner and Vice-Consul for Tonga. The presence of such an officer would, in itself, inhibit Baker's activities, but it seems that Maudslay was given private instructions to undermine Baker's influence and to find means to have him removed. This was recognised by the beach,

113 Langham to Chapman, 26 June 1878, Correspondence of Rev. F. Langham, Dixon Library, Sydney.

114 Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.III, p.153, extract from Gordon's diary for July 1878.

for one of the traders later described the affair for the readers of the Fiji Times:

Pursuant to his laudable design of relieving himself of a dangerous antagonist by hoisting Baker out of Tonga, on his return from this country to Fiji, Sir Arthur Gordon appointed Mr A.P. Maudslay to Tonga as British Vice Consul. This gentleman's ostensible duty... was the protection of British interests in the country.... There can be little doubt however that his actual business was to work up the case against Baker.¹¹⁵

It was recognised by Langham in Fiji, for he wrote to Baker warning him that:

There is no doubt in my mind that the Governor wants to put his hand into Tongan affairs and considers you in the way.¹¹⁶

It was also recognised by Baker, for when he went on board to welcome the new arrival he was coldly rebuffed, and commented:

...from the first it was apparent that his instructions were to snub us in every respect.¹¹⁷

Furthermore it was tacitly acknowledged by Maudslay himself, for in his first letter from Tonga to Gordon he made the revealing comment:

Mr Baker has offended everybody, and is playing, as far as I can see, right into my hands.¹¹⁸

115 The Fiji Times, 7 October 1882, 'Tonga No.III', one of a series of articles (I-VII) written between September and November 1882 by a European in Tonga, probably Robert Hanslip.

116 Langham to Baker, 30 August 1878, Correspondence of Rev. F. Langham, Dixon Library, Sydney.

117 Baker to Chapman, 8 October 1878, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 15.

118 Maudslay to Gordon, 14 July 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.1.

Baker had indeed offended many people, and this made Maudslay's task easier. The opposition of the traders and the missionaries has already been discussed, but there was also a growing discontent among certain groups of Tongans who had been adversely affected by one or other of Baker's activities. First of all there were those who had become indebted through borrowing money for the missionary collections, especially for the Jubilee collection of 1875. Large sums had been borrowed on this occasion but severe hurricanes in 1876¹¹⁹ and again in 1877¹²⁰ had blown the nuts from the palms before they were ripe, thereby preventing the Tongans from making the copra with which to repay their debts. Late in 1877, Godeffroy and Sons, to whom the debts had been transferred, began taking out distress warrants against those most heavily indebted and, by order of the courts, the houses and chattels of several families were sold at public auction to meet their debts.¹²¹ These warrants were executed, in the

119 Baker to Chapman, 16 January 1876, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101: 'this is the year of the hurricane and consequently a very great scarcity of nuts'.

120 Baker to Chapman, 2 May 1877, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 101, reports another disastrous hurricane.

121 David Wilkinson investigated these proceedings and reported his findings in a letter to Maudslay, 30 September 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.11.

main, while Baker was in Australia, and on his return to Tonga he used his influence to stay the proceedings.¹²² A great deal of ill-feeling, however, had been aroused by the Godeffroy action, and Baker lost much support.

A second source of discontent was the new Code which Baker had drawn up in 1875, and in particular the sumptuary provisions which it contained. As has been shown there was little that was new in this Code, but unlike earlier Codes, this one was effectively administered. In 1850 a law had been passed decreeing that 'Chiefs, Governors, and people shall clothe',¹²³ but Meade noted on his visit to Tonga in 1865 that little notice was taken of this law.¹²⁴ Similarly fornication had been made a criminal offence in 1850,¹²⁵ but in 1862 Davis, the missionary at Ha'apai had reported: 'scarce a man marries a virgin'.¹²⁶ Baker reaffirmed these laws

122 Ibid.

123 The Laws of the Kingdom of Tonga, Haabai and Vavau (1850), trans. G.R.H. Miller, 1852, Clause LXI, Young, Journal of a Deputation..., p.442.

124 Meade, A Ride Through New Zealand, p.212.

125 The Laws of the Kingdom of Tonga, Haabai and Vavau (1850), Clause IX."

126 Davis to Eggleston, 18 March 1862, M.O.M.C., set 170: 'An awful state of things exists throughout the islands; scarce a man married a virgin; and there is hardly a young man who has not gone astray'.

in his new code,¹²⁷ but he also created the machinery to enforce them. The office of Minister of Police was set up by the constitution, and this official, at the head of a freshly recruited constabulary, pursued transgressors with relentless zeal.¹²⁸ The result was a startling increase in the criminal classes,¹²⁹ and a growing disaffection towards Baker and his policies.

A third group opposing Baker was described by Gordon as the 'Vaka Tonga party',¹³⁰ a faction made up of conservatives who preferred the fakatonga (Tongan ways and customs) to the fakapapālangi (European ways) which Baker was actively sponsoring. Their complaints were given by Semisi, a magistrate

127 Maudslay to Salisbury, 23 January 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.44, enc.4 (Law on Clothing), enc.6 (Law on Fornication), enc.7 (Law on Adultery), enc.9 (Law on Solicitation).

128 Tongan policemen, according to Thomson, 'were cursed with an excess of zeal bred of ambition', for promotion through the ranks of Kateta (Cadet), Polisi (Policeman) and Inisipeketa (Inspector), depended on the number of convictions an officer could record. Basil Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, pp.112-17.

129 On Niuafou'ou, for instance, where there were only 300 adult males, there occurred between March 1877 and July 1878 a total of 460 convictions, 73 of which were for fornication, adultery and solicitation and 164 of which were for breaches of the clothing law: Maudslay to Salisbury, 23 January 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.44, enc.9.

130 Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.III, p.102, journal entry for April 1878.

at Vava'u:

...We Tongans have but one ambition - to get black clothes and wooden houses.... The women do nothing now that 'masi' [tapa]-making is forbidden. To get money for the missionary collections is the great object of everybody. The women's object is to vie with their friends and neighbours in showy European dress. We all see we are mistaken....¹³¹

The acknowledged leader of this group was 'Uiliame Tungī,¹³² the chief of Hahake and heir to Tu'i Ha'atakalau'a title. Tungī was no doubt a genuine conservative - he had opposed the emancipation edict of 1862 - but he also had other reasons for opposing Baker. In ancient Tonga the Tu'i Ha'atakalau'a was a more senior title than the Tu'i Kanokupolu, and until the promulgation of the constitution Tungī, aware that 'Unga was extremely unpopular¹³³ and that Ma'afu had become a British subject,¹³⁴ probably entertained hopes that the

131 Ibid., p.109.

132 Ibid., p.102.

133 Layard to Derby, 8 March 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.1.

134 Ibid.; Gordon to Carnarvon, 16 October 1876, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.15, enc.4: 'Maafu, as Roko Tui Lau, took the oath of allegiance before me, along with all the Roko Tuis, at Bau on 11 September 1875. The ceremony...took place in public and was witnessed by a great concourse of persons'. Concerning the possibility of Tungī succeeding, Gordon reported in the same letter: 'It is not correct to imply that rivalry exists between Maafu and David Unga. ...Maafu has said "If Unga be appointed, it is good; he

succession would pass to him on the death of the aged Tupou. The constitution, however, had decreed that the succession should pass to 'Unga and his direct heirs. This was probably a contributory reason for Tungī's disaffection towards Baker, his constitution, and all things fakapapālangi. At least it is certain that after 1875 Tungī became Baker's most active opponent, and his people at Mu'a a perennially dissident and factious minority.

Opposition from Tongans was, however, mostly inarticulate, and while Baker enjoyed the support of Tupou it was impotent. But by July 1878 Baker had offended the King too, and discontent among the Tongans assumed a new significance. The reason for the strained relations between Tupou and Baker is not clear. Maudslay believed that Gordon had persuaded the King that his adviser's ways were iniquitous, and that this was the reason for the coolness that existed between the two.¹³⁵ Baker offered a more likely explanation.¹³⁶ After the

footnote 134 (continued)

is one of us.... If another is appointed, we (i.e. 'Unga and himself) will turn Tonga upside down". The "other" here pointed at is... William Tungi, who...is the only Chief at all likely to be an opponent of Maafu and Unga, or at all in a position to become so.'

135 Maudslay to Gordon, 14 July 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.1.

136 Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1878, M.O.M.C., set 169.

things that had been said at the 1878 Conference Baker had decided to have nothing further to do with Tongan affairs and had refused to give any further advice to Tupou. Wilkinson, Maudslay's assistant, reported:

Much that Mr Baker has done since his return ...surprises me much - I gave him credit for more ability and tact. He has seriously offended the King and seems to be acting like a spoilt child after a whipping...¹³⁷

The King had come to trust Baker completely and his desertion at this point left the King to face alone the negotiation of a treaty with Britain and the revision of the laws which he had promised to Gordon; the King was understandably displeased.

With Baker's influence removed Maudslay was able to negotiate an agreement with Tupou with little difficulty. Baker, in his own words, 'studiously kept clear of it altogether',¹³⁸ and by 30 September 1878 Maudslay could report that Tupou had signed an agreement which provided the framework for a treaty between Britain and Tonga. It contained an 'extra-territoriality' clause which in effect negated all Baker's efforts over several years to make whites in Tonga amenable to the local courts.¹³⁹

137 Wilkinson to Gordon, 15 July 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.2.

138 Baker to Chapman, 8 October 1878, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 15.

139 Deed of Agreement between Jioaji Tubou and Alfred A. Maudslay, 28 September 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.29, enc.1.

The revision of what Gordon had termed the 'intolerably irksome and repressive legislation' proved more difficult. However, Maudslay made a promising start. He began by seeking the support of the conservative chiefs, who were a natural focus of opposition to Baker. His behaviour was ostentatiously fakatonga. He chose as the consular ground an 'api kolo in Kolomotu'a, the exclusively Tongan quarter of Nuku'alofa¹⁴⁰ and built on it a consulate constructed of reed-thatch, in pointed contrast to the weatherboard cottages of the 'progressive' chiefs and the whites.¹⁴¹ He frequently invited chiefs to dine with him and sought their cooperation.¹⁴² He had only been in Tonga a fortnight when he confided in a letter to his cousin: 'I find myself becoming the rallying

140 A.P. Maudslay, Life in the Pacific Fifty Years Ago (London, 1930), p.227, a letter to his mother, July 1878: 'The people are most anxious to build me a house on their side of the town, away from the white traders, and I think it would be a good move.'

141 Ibid., p.228: 'Mr Baker has been persuading the chiefs to live in little wooden shanties imported from New Zealand, so I was determined to live in a native house.'

142 Ibid., p.224, a letter to his cousin dated July 1878: 'The native chiefs were rather shy about calling on me at first, but I let them know I should be glad to see them, and all the native swells have now called, and I have had a great many of them to dine with me. They are very pleased but cannot quite understand it.'

point for a conservative reaction'.¹⁴³

Maudslay's most valuable ally was Tungī, whom he took particular pains to cultivate. David Wilkinson, an officer of the Fijian Government who had accompanied Maudslay to Tonga, advised Maudslay that Tungī's influence in Tonga was second only to the King's, and that he was disaffected towards the Baker administration.¹⁴⁴ Maudslay frequently entertained Tungī at the consulate, and after dinner pressed his views on his guest. Reporting one of their nocturnal discussions Maudslay wrote:

We talked away last night for about three hours, and at last I apologised and said that he must not go away with the notion that I wanted to lecture him on the things we talked about. Tungī replied: 'Tell the Consul that's all humbug, he does lecture me, and it is the lectures we get here that has done us all so much good'.¹⁴⁵

Tungī was Speaker in the Assembly and, when Parliament met on 18 July 1878, encouraged by Maudslay's 'lectures' he pressed for a complete revision of the laws. Baker refused to have anything to do with the Parliament. He wrote to

143 Ibid., p.221.

144 Wilkinson to Gordon, 15 July 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.5: 'I have suggested that we keep well in with Tungī, for I believe that we shall not only get to know most in that way but that we shall also do most real good.'

145 Maudslay to Gordon, 8 August 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.8.

Chapman: 'I have not written one line to it, or sent one message to it, or given any advice whatever',¹⁴⁶ and Tungī confirmed this when he told Maudslay:

...this is the first Parliament which has been free from outside pressure. We talk about things like Tongans now, and don't have new things shoved down our throats.¹⁴⁷

The result was that Tungī's influence prevailed and the fakatonga party were able to carry through extensive revisions of the laws. Legislation was framed limiting recoverable debts to £1 per man, allowing people to dress as they pleased, repealing the tapa laws and removing the legal penalties on adultery and fornication.¹⁴⁸ Only the King's signature was wanting for the measures to become law.

In the meantime, however, Baker had begun to reassert his influence. He had effaced himself between July and September but by the end of the latter month it had become evident that Maudslay's intention was to discredit him and procure his recall, and Baker took up the challenge. On 30 September Maudslay noted:

146 Baker to Chapman, 8 October 1878, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 15.

147 Maudslay to Gordon, 8 August 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.8.

148 Maudslay to Gordon, 4 October 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.19.

Baker has been working like a horse to put things right with the people, and I believe, if left alone, would reinstate himself in a few months.¹⁴⁹

He began by denouncing Maudslay from the pulpit and on 26 October preached to the Quarterly Meeting of ministers a telling sermon on the text: 'Oh foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?'.¹⁵⁰ He bridged the gulf that had grown between the mission house and the palace through Wellington Ngū (who, as 'Unga's son, suspected Tungī's motives), and Ngū began relaying Baker's advice to the King.¹⁵¹ Finally Baker called in the aid of his German friends. Towards the end of October Weber visited Nuku'alofa and spent most of his stay closeted with Baker. Before he left Baker, Weber, and the Captain of H.I.G.M.S. Ariadne had a private interview with the King,¹⁵² and soon after this meeting, and probably as a direct consequence of it, it

149 Maudslay to Gordon, 30 September 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.16.

150 Maudslay to Gordon, 26 October 1878; Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.23.

151 Maudslay to Gordon, 25 January 1879, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.23: 'I am inclined to think that the Parliament made very considerable changes, but that Baker has got at the King since, through Gu. The Parliament would have nothing to do with Gu...but Baker stuck to him all through; he almost lived at the Baker's house.

152 Maudslay to Gordon, 28 October 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.22.

was announced that Tupou had rejected nearly all of the proposals put forward by the Parliament; the tapa law was relaxed and laws regulating clothing and prohibiting smoking were modified, but otherwise the code and constitution were left intact. It was also announced that Tupou would appoint as his secretary, to replace the completely derelict Miller, not Thomas Trood, as suggested by Gordon, but 'someone to be nominated by the Emperor of Germany'.¹⁵³ Maudslay's efforts had been completely eclipsed, and Tungī retired to Mu'a, 'to sulk amongst his own people'.¹⁵⁴

Maudslay's other main task was the investigation of Baker's alleged malpractices. His inquiry into the affairs of the Bank of Tonga did not prove very fruitful. Gordon had been told of Baker's banking interests during his visit, and had formed the impression that the profits Baker had made were outrageous.¹⁵⁵ Maudslay was able to examine the books of the bank, and as a result reported to Gordon: 'In the matter of the Bank I think you have been somewhat misled'.¹⁵⁶ However improper it might have been for a missionary

153 Maudslay to Gordon, 25 January 1879, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.23.

154 Ibid.

155 Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.III, p.109.

156 Maudslay to Gordon, 25 January 1879, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.23.

to engage in financial speculation, the speculation itself had been legitimate and the profits (amounting to about 10 per cent on paid up capital, not on nominal capital as Gordon had claimed¹⁵⁷) were not usurious.

Enquiries into the methods used by Baker to raise funds for the mission proved more rewarding. This task was begun soon after the Consul and his party arrived in Tonga,¹⁵⁸ and was conducted mainly by David Wilkinson and Taniela 'Afu, a Tongan Wesleyan minister who had spent many years in Fiji and had accompanied Maudslay to Tonga for the specific purpose of questioning Tongans about mission collections. Maudslay sought and received from Tupou permission to enquire into Tongan indebtedness to Europeans,¹⁵⁹ and under this pretext Wilkinson and 'Afu visited several villages in Tongatapu, including Mu'a, Fua'amotu, Vaini and

157 Ibid.

158 Wilkinson had begun making inquiries by 15 July 1878 (three weeks after his arrival in Tonga): Wilkinson to Gordon, 15 July 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.2; inquiries in the villages were begun on 2 August 1878: Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation...October 1879, p.57.

159 Maudslay to Baker, 26 August 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.45, enc.1: 'Permission has been granted to me to join in an inquiry into the amount of indebtedness, to traders and others, of the natives of this island.'

Kolovai, and took statements from the people concerning the manner in which collections were made, the indebtedness of the people caused by the Jubilee collections, and the distress warrants that had been executed by Godeffroys.¹⁶⁰ It was when news of this investigation reached Baker that he threw off his lethargy and began taking steps to counteract Maudslay's influence. He had already prevailed upon Treskow, the Godeffroy agent, to stay the execution of further distress warrants,¹⁶¹ but at this point he settled all the outstanding debts himself, using £300 from the Home Mission and Contingent Fund.¹⁶² He also warned the villagers, through the local preachers, that no information was to be given to Wilkinson unless a written authority from the King was produced.¹⁶³ Three church officers who had already given information were dismissed from their posts.¹⁶⁴ These steps were effective enough, but were too late to prevent Wilkinson gathering some very

160 Wilkinson to Maudslay, 30 September 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.11.

161 Statements No.1, 2 and 3 of W. Treskow, Manager of the Tongatapu Agency of J.C. Godeffroy and Sons, Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation... October 1879, p.46.

162 Ibid.

163 Wilkinson to Maudslay, 30 September 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.13.

164 Maudslay to Gordon, 28 October 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.22.

damaging statements.

Meanwhile Maudslay had sought corroborative evidence from the Europeans, and Charles Baker, Washington Simpson, Phillip Payne, Francis Payne, and P.S. Bloomfield, all of whom had lent money to Tongans for mission collections, swore affidavits revealing some of the shabbier aspects of the fakamisinali.¹⁶⁵ That of Bloomfield is typical:

I, P.S. Bloomfield, make oath and say as follows: In the year 1874 I gave out money for the Missionary collections, but not to a large amount. In 1875 I gave money to the natives of Kolovou [Kolovai], Kalago [Kolongal], Afa and Havehiuli [Haveluliku?], Manuka, Navutoka and Talafou [Talafo'ou]. I went round to these villages with Mr Baker, meeting him at Talafou by arrangement; at each village money was handed to me by Mr Baker to distribute to the natives on the day of the collection for the Church. The money was given to me at the ministers houses, at the Church door, and sometimes in the Church itself. If I ran short of money I called Mr Baker out of the Church and asked him for more. I gave Mr Baker orders on the firm of Godeffroy and Son as I drew the money from him. I advanced about \$5,000 in the year 1875.... It was clearly understood by the natives that the advance was to be repaid in copra....¹⁶⁶

165 Affidavit of Francis Payne, 23 October 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.45, enc.7; affidavit of W.P. Simpson, 28 October 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.45, enc.8; affidavit of Charles Baker, 30 October 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.45, enc.9; affidavit of Phillip Payne, 22 November 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.45, enc.12.

166 Affidavit of P.S. Bloomfield, 2 November 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.45, enc.10.

Finally, in August 1878, Maudslay sailed to Niuafu'ou, an isolated island two hundred miles north of Vava'u, which was included in the Tongatapu circuit. Because it was nearly inaccessible and was seldom visited by outsiders, Maudslay suspected that it was Baker's 'pet hunting ground',¹⁶⁷ and his visit confirmed his suspicions. He was told that the population, numbering only 300 taxpayers (males over 16 years of age) made an annual subscription to the mission of from \$10,000 to \$12,000, that the people were at the time some \$6,000 to \$7,000 in debt, and that they had been driven to the extremity of picking unripe nuts to make copra for their creditors.¹⁶⁸

By September Maudslay had all the evidence he required, and wrote to the Missionary Committee in Sydney reporting his findings. He reminded Chapman that he had assured Gordon that:

if Mr Baker were shown to have encouraged or aided in the payment of subscriptions in borrowed money, to be repaid in copra, he should be recalled;

and invited the Committee to redeem this pledge. He indicated very plainly that, if the Committee did not comply, he would bring a public scandal about its ears:

167 Maudslay to Gordon, 30 September 1878, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.16.

168 Ibid.; Maudslay to the Chairman and Ministers of the Wesleyan Mission, 14 December 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.45, enc.23.

It is, of course, my duty to report on such matters as these officially, but knowing how unwilling Sir Arthur Gordon would be publicly to throw any discredit upon the Wesleyan Mission in these Islands...I shall...make no use of the information until I have received an answer from you.¹⁶⁹

The Committee was in a dilemma. In the first place, Maudslay's letter uncovered nothing that the Committee did not well know. Chapman himself had attended the 1874 meetings,¹⁷⁰ and the method of raising subscriptions was frequently referred to in missionaries' letters.

In the second place, Tonga was the Missionary Society's most important single source of revenue. In the nine years since Baker took charge, Tonga had sent £39,375 to Sydney, and after subtracting the cost of missionaries' salaries and Tonga's share of the expenses of the John Wesley (£22,924 over this period) a surplus of £16,451, or nearly £2,000 per annum, was left.¹⁷¹

169 Maudslay to the Secretary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Sydney, 5 September 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.45, enc.6.

170 Chapman to the Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, London, 17 March 1877, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.15, enc.2: 'I myself was present a few years since at several of their meetings, and I witnessed not a little that was novel, but I certainly saw nothing that was objectionable or improper'.

171 These figures are taken from issues of the Report of the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society over the period from 1869 to 1878.

This surplus had made it possible for the Society to balance its books, and in 1873, for the first time, it had not needed assistance from the parent body in Britain.¹⁷² In 1875 a new mission had been opened by George Brown in New Britain, and this too was made possible only by the finance provided from Tonga. When sending his 1875 remittance Baker had commented: 'surely Tonga lays golden eggs';¹⁷³ this was an apt allusion, and the Committee was well aware of the implied moral.

In the third place the members of the Committee had grave doubts about the motives of Gordon and Maudslay. Langham had written to Chapman from Fiji: 'It is singular and suspicious that they are content to do nothing if only Mr Baker is removed from Tongatabu'.¹⁷⁴ Chapman

172 In 1865 the British society subsidised the Australian Society's activities to the extent of £5,972 (Report A.W.M.M.S., 1865-66, p.102); over the following three years the subsidy was respectively £4,024, £4,881, £3,795 (Report A.W.M.M.S., 1866-67, p.110; Report A.W.M.M.S., 1867-68, p.108; Report A.W.M.M.S., 1868-69, p.106 respectively). By 1871 this had been reduced to £145 (Report A.W.M.M.S., 1871-72, p.106); in 1872 the Australian body balanced its books for the first time, and actually remitted £666 to London (Report A.W.M.M.S., 1872-73, p.68).

173 Baker to Chapman, 7 January 1876, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.

174 Langham to Chapman, 17 August 1878, Correspondence of Rev. F. Langham, Dixon Library, Sydney.

agreed. He wrote to the Rev. M.C. Osborne in London:

Mr Brown [Rev. George Brown, missionary in New Britain] had [a visit from?] a gentleman occupying a principal position in Her Majesty's Service whose name I don't want to give at present.... At last Tonga was mentioned and the gentleman said: 'Sir Arthur Gordon wants to drive away Rev. S.W. Baker from Tonga because Mr Baker governs Tonga and Sir Arthur Gordon wants to govern it himself.' This is the opinion of many of us here. If Mr Baker could have been relied upon to advance British political interests I do not believe any complaint against him would have reached us from British officials.¹⁷⁵

Moreover the Committee had recently concluded an investigation into Baker's affairs, and had officially approved his conduct. Under these circumstances the Committee probably agreed with Langham, who advised:

Baker cannot be dealt with in the summary way that would suit Sir Arthur.... If Baker is right with the people, stand by him, and do not be the Lord High Commissioner's catspaw.¹⁷⁶

Yet Maudslay's threat was serious, and something had to be done. The Committee decided to shift the responsibility to the District Meeting of the missionaries in Tonga, which was instructed

175 Chapman to Rev. M.C. Osborne (Private and Confidential), 13 September 1879, M.O.M.C., set 33.

176 Langham to Chapman, 13 October 1878, Correspondence of Rev. F. Langham, Dixon Library, Sydney.

to enquire into the Consul's charges.¹⁷⁷

In Tonga, however, the missionaries had realised what Maudslay was doing, and recognising that an attack on the collections system involved them all, they had closed their ranks. As Moulton had left for England, Watkin conducted the investigation. His attitude was given in a letter to Chapman:

...surely a consul ought to be employed in something more honourable than taking affidavits from such men as those who have supplied them - I scarcely know how to describe the manner of these traders - who received this money from Mr Baker with the object of making something by purchasing the copra - and after Mr Baker obliging these men by advancing the money they are mean enough to turn around in this way - and the British consul is mean enough to make the use he has done of the information supplied. Is Mr Baker to be held responsible for the acts of these traders in giving out money to the natives indiscriminately, as one says? If Mr Baker has erred it is on the side of kindness to these men - but it matters not what we do our conduct will be maligned - if instead of advancing money to the traders Mr B. had taken the copra which he must have done then we would have heard him charged with trading, with making a profit out of the copra, to the injury of the legitimate traders...if we did wrong by so doing it was an error of judgement-- our motives were good and honest and our earnest desire to help the funds of the Missionary Committee.¹⁷⁸

177 Chapman to Maudslay, 22 October 1878, F3/2/78, no.30.

178 Watkin to Chapman, 21 April 1879, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 9.

The District Meeting met in December 1878; Watkin took the chair; Maudslay's charges were read and Baker's explanations given. The meeting then unanimously resolved that Maudslay's charges were without foundation. When Baker announced his intention to resign at the end of the year, the meeting passed the following resolution unanimously:

This meeting desires to express its sympathy with Rev. S.W. Baker under the trying circumstances in which he has been placed through the exaggerated, and in many instances false reports which have been circulated against him, and would earnestly pray that the great Head of the Church may guide, guard, and bless Bro. & Sister Baker during the remaining portion of their missionary life.¹⁷⁹

Baker's decision to retire from Tonga had been officially communicated to the Committee before the District Meeting began. Early in December 1878 he had written to Chapman:

May I ask you when my consul's case is over to ask permission for me to return next Conference 1880.... I hope you will excuse me putting it so strongly, but I must return in April 1880.¹⁸⁰

This decision was communicated to Maudslay, who,

179 'Minutes of the Friendly Islands District Meeting, 12 December 1878', Friendly Islands District Meeting Minute Book, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

180 Baker to Chapman, 30 December 1878, M.O.M.C., Uncat. MSS, set 197, item 2.

however, no longer considered it satisfactory. By January 1879 his plans had been completely upset and he had been made to look foolish, both in Tongan and European eyes. His attempt to remove Baker had failed, his proposed alterations to the laws had been rejected, and the King had agreed to accept a German secretary. His most important ally, Tungī, had retired to his own village discomfited, while 'Unga, who had been well disposed towards him when he first arrived, had become convinced that he sought the succession of Ma'afu and had therefore been won back to his old alliance with Baker.¹⁸¹ Baker had also gained considerable support from the Tongans by personally settling outstanding mission debts, and by encouraging the already widespread suspicion that Maudslay's attempt to discredit him was the first step in a plot to subvert Tongan independence.¹⁸² To avoid complete humiliation Maudslay carried out the threat he had made to the Missionary Committee. In January 1879 he wrote three long despatches to the Marquis of Salisbury, Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on the subject of Baker's delinquencies. The first despatch was an indictment

181 Maudslay to Gordon, 25 January 1879, Maudslay, Private Corresp., p.26.

182 See for instance: 'Translation of Rev. S.W. Baker's speech at Mu'a, 1st September 1879', Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation...October 1879, p.22.

of Baker for his political activities, and detailed what Maudslay considered were the faults in the Tongan constitution and laws. It repeated most of the criticism made by Gordon a year earlier, and drew special attention to Baker's relations with the Germans, as exemplified by the announced appointment of a German secretary.¹⁸³ The second despatch concerned the mission collections. It gave an outline of Maudslay's proceedings and presented a resumé of the evidence he had collected, together with statements from Tongan debtors and affidavits from the Europeans.¹⁸⁴ The third despatch described Baker's commercial activities, his association with the long-defunct sugar plantation and the Bank of Tonga, and alleged that he virtually controlled the finances of the Tongan Government. Maudslay also reported his belief that a mutually rewarding understanding existed between Baker and Godeffroys. He concluded:

I trust that in this and the two previous despatches I have given sufficient grounds to justify the wish I have expressed that he (Mr Baker) may be speedily removed from the islands.¹⁸⁵

Once official sanctions were invoked events

-
- 183 Maudslay to Salisbury, No.1 Consular, 23
January 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.44.
- 184 Maudslay to Salisbury, No.2 Consular, 23
January 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.45.
- 185 Maudslay to Salisbury, No.3 Consular, 24
January 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.46.

moved quickly towards a climax. The Foreign Office put diplomatic pressure on Germany to renounce its intention of nominating a secretary for Tupou, and the German Government, which 'anxiously desired to consolidate the cordial understanding already established with Her Majesty's Government in regard to their common interests', agreed. Germany also agreed to 'appoint a new Consul-General in the place of M. Weber, who would be instructed to establish the most cordial and intimate relations with the British authorities in Polynesia'.¹⁸⁶

The task of deporting Baker was referred to Gordon, who was in Britain at the time, and who had the necessary powers under the Order in Council which had created his office. Gordon, however, was aware that if he deported Baker himself he would provoke hostility from missionaries everywhere, and understandably preferred to work through the Wesleyan authorities. Accordingly he brought Maudslay's accusations under the notice of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London. This body had been largely prepared for Gordon's overtures by Moulton, who, from his vantage point in England, had done some effective sniping. For instance he wrote to Chapman, in January 1879:

I...received a note from Dr Punshon requesting me to answer certain charges and to refute certain statements that appeared in a certain

186 Odo Russell to Salisbury, Berlin, 9 May 1879, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.53.

German periodical reflecting very strongly on Mr B's doings in Niua, and, if correct, amply justifying the statements made by the 'Earl and the Doctor'. I was obliged to reply that it was altogether out of my power to do as he wished; that I believed the statements to be correct.¹⁸⁷

The London authorities of the Wesleyan Missionary Society were greatly concerned that Gordon might make Maudslay's despatches public, as he had obviously implied he would do if his demands were not met, for they calculated that such publicity 'might readily cost us more than all we now from year to year contribute to help you [the Australian Committee]'.¹⁸⁸ They therefore pressed upon the Sydney body a 'fraternal statement of views' which concluded:

Under these circumstances we cannot but feel that the usefulness of Mr Baker as Chairman of the Tonga District is at an end. A civil investigation, even with the best issue, would disturb the interests of our missions all over the world, and with any issue but the best would seriously wound those interests. The prompt removal of Mr Baker seems to us desirable, equally for local and general reasons.¹⁸⁹

The Missionary Committee in Sydney received this advice in July 1879 and, despite the misgivings

¹⁸⁷ Moulton to Chapman, 2 January 1879, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.

¹⁸⁸ Wesleyan Missionary Society, London, to Chapman, 27 May 1879, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.III, p.316.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

it had, decided to accept it.¹⁹⁰ Baker was therefore informed that he was recalled. He was further advised that a deputation would investigate Maudslay's charges in Tonga, though it would in no way affect the Committee's decision to recall him.¹⁹¹ He was, in fact, to be punished first and tried later.

The investigation of the charges against Baker was conducted by the Rev. Benjamin Chapman and the Rev. William Clarke, the special commissioners of the Board of Missionary Management.

190 Chapman to Osborne, 13 September 1879, M.O.M.C., set 33.

191 (For Private Circulation only) Resumé of an Enquiry in re Tongan Mission Affairs, Mr A.P. Maudslay, H.B.M. Vice Consul v Rev. S.W. Baker (Auckland, 1879), p.1: 'Copy of Resolutions of Board of Mission Management, passed at a meeting ...July 16, 1879.... The Missionary Secretary having read to the Board a letter from Rev. M.C. Osborne touching Tongan affairs...after careful deliberation it was resolved: 1. That the Rev. S.W. Baker be recalled 2. That in the interests of Rev. S.W. Baker and the Friendly Islands Mission, an examination into the charges against Mr Baker shall be made in Tonga...'; see also, Chapman and Clarke to Baker, 6 October 1873, Letters and Correspondence in re Tongan Affairs and the Request of H.M. King George for Tonga to be made an Independent District, Sydney, October 1879, p.4: 'so many unpleasant circumstances have occurred during several years past as to greatly lessen your power for usefulness, and therefore your removal was necessary in the interests of the district, independent altogether of the charges we are sent to investigate'.

It began on 8 October 1879 and continued for three weeks; Maudslay acted as prosecutor and Baker conducted his own defence. Baker was charged with being an agent for Godeffroy and Sons; with conducting the business transactions of the Tongan Government; with interfering in political matters; and, under three heads, with encouraging Tongan indebtedness at Missionary Meetings. It was therefore an investigation of all the charges that a long series of complainants had levelled against Baker. It was also the only investigation that had been held in situ, at which accused and accuser stood face to face, and at which evidence was tested by cross-examination. Its findings therefore offer the most reliable testimony to the truth or falsehood of Baker's alleged mal-practices.

The result of the investigation, as the most hostile witnesses had to admit, was an almost complete vindication of Baker. Commenting on the trial some time later, a European trader from Tonga (probably Robert Hanslip and certainly no ally of Baker's) wrote in the Fiji Times:

The contest was...too unequal. Sir Arthur Gordon's baby began to flounder from the outset, and the exhibition of weakness became so lamentable that Baker fairly played with his opponent, by offering him evidence to support his case, so that the prosecution might present something like a respectable obstacle for him to demolish...so that at the end, though he might have returned a perfect conviction as to the truth of every

charge laid against the accused, the Rev. Statesman's worst enemy could not conscientiously have failed to give a verdict of not proven on every charge but one.¹⁹²

The one point which Maudslay was able to substantiate concerned the collections. It was proved that Baker had lent money to several traders on the understanding that it would be redistributed to Tongans for the Missionary Meetings. Baker readily admitted that this was true, and further admitted that the practice had been ill-advised, but in his defence claimed that he lent money only because there was a shortage of coin in Tonga and that the system had been abandoned since the difficulties that attended the 1875 collections had been discovered. He claimed that, but for the hurricanes, there would have been no difficulties; the Tongans would have quickly repaid their debts and no distress would have been caused. As it was he had done everything in his power to alleviate the distress, even to the extent of paying the outstanding debts. In his zeal for the cause he admitted he had been guilty of a peccadillo but his motives, he claimed, were honourable.

All Maudslay's other charges Baker denied completely. He defied Maudslay to offer any evidence to indicate that he was in any way an agent of Godeffroys, and the Consul was obliged to protest

192 The Fiji Times, 18 October 1882, 'Tonga No.IV', (from a Correspondent).

that the charge was not of his making and that, although he had heard rumours to that effect, he had never reported that Baker was connected with the German firm. To counter Maudslay's charge that he controlled the financial affairs of the Tongan Government, Baker produced a signed statement from 'Unga, the Premier, denying that Baker played any part in these affairs; and to counter the charge that he was 'virtual ruler of Tonga' he produced a statement from Tupou declaring that his only function was that of a trusted and valued adviser.¹⁹³ On this charge Baker put his own case very competently. He told the inquiry:

That I have great influence with the Tongan Government, I don't deny; that I designed their flag, I admit; that at the King's request I compiled the original draft of the Constitution, I admit; that at his request I assisted him in reference to the laws, I admit; that I corrected the proof copies of the laws, I admit; that at his request I planned the present system of Police Courts and Debtor's Courts and a system of registration, I admit; that as long back as 1862 I drew out the charter of their liberty, I admit; that I was editor of the Boobooi and the Tonga Times, I admit; that I have used my influence to compel, or to enforce, or to interfere, I deny. I have given my opinion, but I have never pressed my views either on the King or on the chiefs, which His Majesty's letter to the committee proves.¹⁹⁴

193 Minutes of an Enquiry by Deputation...October 1879, passim.

194 Ibid., p.75.

Maudslay was unable to produce any evidence to contradict him.

As a result of the investigation Baker was confident that his actions would be approved and his recall negatived. He told the inquiry:

I appeal to the world wherever civilization is to be found, to pronounce their verdict... and I fear not what the verdict will be... I feel I can confidently leave the matter with a clear conscience to the judgement of my brethren and of my fellow citizens and in the hands of God.¹⁹⁵

So confident was he that he had disproved the charges that he printed a resumé of the evidence and circulated it among the members of the Conference, before which he appeared in 1880.¹⁹⁶ The Conference, however, while it resolved that nothing had been proved 'directly against Mr Baker's moral and religious character', nevertheless confirmed his recall, and offered him an appointment in a New South Wales circuit.¹⁹⁷ Despite the wording of the resolutions, it was clear to Baker and to everyone that his missionary career had ended in disgrace, and that all his efforts to build a reputation for himself had come to nothing.

195 Ibid., p.77.

196 (For Private Circulation only) Resumé of an Enquiry in re Tongan Mission Affairs, Mr A.P. Maudslay, H.B.M. Vice Consul v Rev. S.W. Baker (Auckland 1879).

197 Maudslay to Gordon, Sydney, 15 February 1880, Maudslay, Life in the Pacific, p.258.

Instead of retiring from mission work amid the expressions of esteem and praise, which he felt his twenty years of service in the field deserved, he had been summarily recalled. He refused to accept an appointment from the Conference.¹⁹⁸ He would seek employment where his talents were appreciated.

IT is a fairly simple matter to describe the process by which Baker was pulled down from the seat of the mighty. It is a rather more difficult matter to weigh the justice of these proceedings. Any attempt to do so must comprehend the sequence in which the events occurred.

Baker was challenged in 1876 by Layard, whose accusations were based on the flimsiest of evidence culled from the least reliable of sources. Inquiry into these complaints resulted in complete exoneration for Baker. Layard's charges, however, undoubtedly influenced Thomas, who, for personal reasons, made similar charges in 1877. As a result of the inquiry into these charges by the 1878 Conference, Baker was again exonerated. Baker was challenged for a third time by Sir Arthur Gordon and his subordinate, Maudslay, in 1878, and when these charges were investigated by the District Meeting in December 1878, Baker was again cleared. In this case it may be argued that

198 Ibid198

the tribunal was not impartial; but neither were Gordon and Maudslay.

By 1879 therefore Baker's activities had been investigated at three inquiries, and on each occasion he had been vindicated. Yet without further inquiry he was recalled in October 1879. The reason for his recall was the intervention of Gordon, who wished Baker out of the way and was prepared to use a little blackmail to enforce his wishes. The Missionary Society, realising that it stood to lose more from a public scandal than it stood to gain from Baker's collections, offered him as a propitiatory sacrifice to avert the wrath of the High Commissioner. There was, in a strictly legal sense, little justice in such a proceeding.

It may be argued, however, that Baker's recall, while not just, was justifiable; that his behaviour was improper, even pernicious, and that he deserved to be humiliated. It must be admitted that Baker was not a heroic figure. He was pompous, equivocal, plausible, self-righteous and venal. Few people ever liked him, and outside his own family (which was intensely loyal) the only friends he ever had were Tupou and Watkin, and even they vacillated. He was guilty of many lapses from the accepted standards of missionary behaviour: he used his (albeit limited) medical skill to supplement his stipend. He lent money, and charged interest on the loans. He meddled in

politics. He pandered to the conceit of the Tongans, and was not over-scrupulous about the methods used to raise money for the mission. Yet to offset these deficiencies he had considerable ability and a great capacity for hard work, and these talents were used in the interests of the mission and Tonga as much as in his own interest. As a result of his political meddling Tonga had become recognised by 1879 as an independent sovereign state, while the money he had collected had been used to build numerous churches in Tonga, to provide increased educational opportunities for Tongans, and to lay the foundation for the mission to become an independent self-governing church. Moreover in developing his system for collecting subscriptions he had only been obeying the instructions of the Missionary Committee, given when he first took charge of Tonga, to be 'more systematic and efficient' in raising contributions. Until Gordon's intervention this system, which had kept the Society solvent for a decade, was recognised and tacitly approved by the Committee. The responsibility belonged to the whole Missionary Society as much as to Baker who was, in reality, made a scapegoat, a role for which his personal shortcomings made him particularly suitable.

The only other possible justification for Baker's recall is the claim that the Tongans themselves would benefit from his removal, and wished him out of the way. This was the feeling

of Gordon, who said that:

I have seldom seen a population so deeply and profoundly discontented, or where there was more cause to fear from a sudden and lamentable uprising against a system, the pressure of which was too heavy to be borne.¹⁹⁹

Maudslay had come to the same conclusion. In his despatch to the Marquis of Salisbury seeking Baker's deportation he had stated:

I feel sure...that should his removal be effected it would be looked upon as an act of deliverance by the greater number of both whites and natives on this island.²⁰⁰

This accusation was answered by the Tongans themselves, who were in a much better position to judge the value of Baker's influence than either Gordon or Maudslay, and who gave a verdict that must have surprised the paternal British officials. Tupou replied to Baker's removal by declaring all Wesleyan leases in Tonga null and void until there should be in Tonga a free and independent church, allowed to manage its affairs without intervention from Sydney,²⁰¹ and to Chapman and and Clarke he wrote:

199 Gordon to Chapman, 22 April 1879, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.III, p.285.

200 Maudslay to Salisbury, 24 January 1879, No.3 Consular, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.46.

201 'Unga, on behalf of Tupou, to Rev. B. Chapman, and the Representative of the Church in Sydney, 6 October 1879, Letters and Correspondence in re Tongan Affairs...October 1879, p.3.

This is what is plain to Tonga, Mr Baker goes, not because he is wrong, but because of his love for Tonga.²⁰²

That many of Tupou's subjects were of the same mind is shown by the fact that no less than 2,275 of them signed a petition asking that Baker be permitted to remain. They wrote:

Our minds are greatly grieved for it to be said Tonga dislikes Mr Baker. It does not. For is there one we love so much as Mr Baker...;²⁰³

and even allowing that neither of these views were spontaneous their testimony cannot be dismissed. Baker gave what seems to be a reasonable explanation for the attitude of Tupou and the Tongan petitioners. He explained in a letter to the deputation:

The King and the people well know that I was tried at last D.M. for what the Deputation are now come down to investigate, and that no Church court has been held since, and that it is solely in consequence of pressure brought in the Committee by Sir Arthur Gordon that I am now recalled. They are persuaded that it is because of my expressed opposition to the annexing of Tonga to Fiji

202 'Unga, on behalf of Tupou, to the Rev. B. Chapman and the Rev. W. Clarke, 17 October 1879, Letters and Correspondence in re Tongan Affairs...October 1879, p.7.

203 Ilaisi Lagi and 2981 other signatories to Chapman and Clarke, 28 October 1879, Letters and Correspondence in re Tongan Affairs...October 1879, p.8.

that I am thus wanted out of the way. They feel that it is not because of what I have done that I am leaving, but because I am their friend.²⁰⁴

And despite all the reservations that may so easily be made about Baker and his works this is probably a closer approximation to the truth than any other explanation.

204 Baker to Chapman and Clarke, 7 October 1879, Letters and Correspondence in re Tongan Affairs...October 1879, p.5.

CHAPTER 8

THE KING'S FIRST MINISTER

WHEN Baker, at the behest of the Board of Missionary Management, left Tonga at the beginning of November 1879, he took David 'Unga with him to New Zealand so that the Prince might seek medical attention for a liver ailment. Treatment by the New Zealand physicians was unavailing however, and 'Unga died in Auckland on 18 December 1879.¹ Baker wrote to Tupou advising him of his son's death and promising to escort the body back to Tonga;² then, leaving instructions for the Prince's remains to be embalmed, he sailed for Sydney to attend the Conference.

The Conference confirmed Baker's recall from Tonga and offered him an appointment in New South Wales. Baker refused this offer, asking instead to be made a supernumery, receiving no salary but with leave to live in New Zealand. The Conference complied. Baker then informed the session that he intended to return to Tonga to take back 'Unga's body, for not to do so would constitute a grave breach of Tongan etiquette. While in the Group he would also collect materials

1 Symonds to Gordon, 5 January 1880, F3/12/80, no.4.

2 Symonds to Gordon, 10 January 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.173.

for a memoir of Tupou which he intended to write.³ There was some feeling at the Conference that Baker should be forbidden to revisit Tonga, and a resolution to that effect was canvassed among the delegates. Had this resolution been put to the Conference and adopted, Baker, as a minister, would have had to comply, but the resolution was dropped when he promised that his visit to the scene of his former labours would be only of short duration, and that while there he would try 'to calm down the excited feelings which had been aroused in connection with his recall'.⁴

Baker presumably returned to New Zealand shortly after the termination of the Conference in early February 1880, but though numerous vessels arrived in Tonga from New Zealand during the ensuing four months, Baker and the body of 'Unga remained in Auckland.⁵ The cortège did not arrive

- 3 Chapman to Gordon, 12 March 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.232.
- 4 J.B. Waterhouse, The Secession and Persecution in Tonga (Sydney, 1886), p.4.
- 5 Symonds to Gordon, 10 January 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.174: 'A letter from Mr Baker to the King stated that he, Mr Baker, would return with the body and he is expected by the next trip of the Myrtle'; Blyth to Gordon, 19 June 1880, F3/12/80, no.90: 'During six months the whole country has been waiting with the full knowlege that had Mr Baker been able to come himself or been willing to allow the body to be sent without him, it could have been here in January'.

in Tonga until 30 May 1880, but when it did arrive the reason for the delay became apparent. Baker had used the influence he enjoyed with the German establishment in Polynesia to seek a favour, and 'Unga was borne back to his native land not in the hold of a copra schooner but aboard His Imperial German Majesty's Sloop of War Nautilus.⁶

The German warship remained in Tonga for the funeral (which was held in 'Uiha, Ha'apai, on 10 June), and its presence added greatly to the funereal pomp which marked the occasion. Minute guns were fired and forty-five German marines, slow marching to muffled drums, acted as pall-bearers.⁷ Even Maudslay's successor, James Blyth, vainly trying to uphold British dignity in the face of such overwhelming odds, had to admit: 'The ceremonies were marked by the greatest solemnity and decorum', though he added: 'They were also marked by the ostentatious prominence given to the Germans'.⁸

Tupou was deeply moved by the solicitude shown by Baker, and by the respect which the German Empire, at Baker's instigation, had shown to Tonga. When the Parliament met a month later, the King in his opening speech publicly acknowledged

6 Blyth to Gordon, 19 June 1880, F3/12/80, no.90.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

his gratitude. He told the assembly:

...I stand here today to thank Mr Baker for what he has accomplished - in bringing David to be buried in the land of his ancestors. Thanks to Mr Baker and his love, and I am also truly grateful to the Captain of the German man of war and the Emperor of Germany because of David being brought in the German vessel of war, and also for the respect which was shown him - a proof of our being a nation.⁹

Baker and Tupou visited Vava'u after the funeral, but Blyth returned to Nuku'alofa where he began to hear persistent and disturbing rumours that the King had given Baker an appointment in the Government.¹⁰ On 21 June these rumours were confirmed when Blyth discovered that a German trader had received an official letter from Baker in which the latter described himself as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Comptroller of Revenue.¹¹ Tupou returned to Nuku'alofa on 1 July,¹² and the next day Blyth requested an interview with him to determine the truth of the matter. He reported to Gordon:

9 'His Majesty King George's Speech at the Opening of the Legislative Assembly', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.6, 10 November 1880, p.2.

10 Blyth to Gordon, 21 June 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.364.

11 Ibid.

12 Blyth to Gordon, 1 July 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.367.

I said that I had heard some time ago that Mr Baker had received an appointment from His Majesty but did not believe it.... The King said, 'It is true'.

'What is the appointment?'

King, 'Minister of Foreign Affairs'.

'Is that the same as Premier?'

'No, it is distinct - there will be a Premier also'.

Then I continued...that I could not see how such an appointment was consistent with His Majesty's promises to Your Excellency and Her Majesty's Government.

The King said, ... 'Surely I can govern my country in my own way and appoint Mr Baker if I please. I do not know if he is friendly to his own country or not, but I think he will do for me'.¹³

Worse news was in store for Gordon. It was generally assumed in Tonga that the next Premier would be Tungī,¹⁴ and at the beginning of July Tupou probably intended Tungī to have the appointment. By the time Parliament opened on 24 July, however, he had changed his mind. There were evidently two reasons for this.

13 Blyth to Gordon, 3 July 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.368.

14 David Wilkinson visited Tonga in February 1880, and reported: 'Taniela tells me there is but one feeling that Tugi [Tungī] ought to succeed Uga ['Unga] as Premier, but of course nothing definite will be done until after the funeral...for real progress Tugi is the man, he has the confidence of the King and the esteem of the people'. Wilkinson to Gordon, 21 February 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.209.

Firstly, Tungī openly favoured British interests and was on very good terms with Gordon and his consular officials. Baker was able to convince the King that Gordon sought to compromise Tonga's independence. Taniela 'Afu told Blyth at the beginning of July:

...the King was rarawa sara [much pained] with us.... Baker had been every day...saying that you [Gordon] would vakacacana na vanua [do evil to the land], he said that Baker had accused you cakandolo [a thousand times].¹⁵

Baker had convinced the King that Tungī would be a willing instrument in Gordon's hands. Secondly, news reached Tonga on 13 July that the French had annexed Tahiti and declared protectorates over Raiatea, Borabora and Huahine,¹⁶ and this forceful reminder of the vulnerability of Polynesian kingdoms no doubt dissuaded Tupou from reposing his confidence in one whose loyalties were not above suspicion.

On 23 July Blyth called on Tupou to share a bowl of kava, and reported to Gordon: 'His Majesty was quiet and, I thought, more restrained

15 Blyth to Gordon, 3 July 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.368.

16 This event occurred on 25 June 1880; news of the affair was brought to Tonga by the schooner Sirocco, which arrived on 13 July 1880: Blyth to Gordon, 20 July 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.378.

than usual'.¹⁷ On the following day Parliament opened and the reason for Tupou's constraint towards the British Consul was explained, for the King told the assembled representatives:

I wish to refer to...Mr Baker again visiting Tonga. I am greatly pleased - for who helped us to make the laws and other arrangements of the Government and what we have accomplished. Even this Parliament Meeting was his work. I have asked him to help me.... I have asked him to represent me in your Parliament Meeting and inform you as to my wishes.¹⁸

The office of King's representative and spokesman was an informal one; in more formal terms Baker was nominated Prime Minister, Minister for External Affairs and Minister for Lands.¹⁹ In seven weeks Baker had completely resurrected his fortunes; when he returned to Tonga on 30 May he had been officially discredited and degraded; by 24 July he had been raised to a position of unambiguous authority and standing. It was perhaps only natural that he should gloat over the powerful adversaries whom he had outmanoeuvred. Blyth reported:

17 Blyth to Gordon, Diary letter dated 20 July 1880, entry for Friday 23 [July], Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.380.

18 'His Majesty's Speech at the Opening of the Legislative Assembly', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.6, p.2.

19 Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.1, 1 September 1880.

Several times in bringing forward a new 'motion' Baker is said to have interrupted himself with a small laugh saying, 'But I must be careful what I say in case someone comes from Fiji and takes me away'.²⁰

Among the Tongans Baker was known by a new nickname: Motu'a Mohetō (the old man who abuses sleeping women) and Sikotā (the Kingfisher - Baker's pseudonym in Koe Boobooi) gave way to Ta'emangoi,²¹ meaning 'the irrepressible one', or 'the one who surmounts all difficulties'.

WITH his position in the Government established in positive and explicit terms Baker was in a position to take up the policies he had advocated when he was merely the King's unofficial adviser, and pursue them with vigour. Between 1876 and 1879 he had been under continuous attack and had gradually withdrawn from political life. Even his newspaper, Koe Boobooi, was abandoned in November 1877. As a result many of the reforms which he had introduced in 1875 had either never been properly implemented or had ceased to function through lack of administrative supervision. The department most affected by the lack of surveillance was the Treasury, which between 1876 and 1879 had been left

20 Blyth to Gordon, Diary letter dated 20 July 1880, entry for 31 July 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.380.

21 Blyth to Gordon, 5 July 1880, F3/12/80, no.5.

to its own devices, assisted only by the drunken and derelict Miller. By 1880 it was in a state of chaos.

In November 1879, when Gordon visited Tonga, he took with him Dr McGregor, the Fiji Government's Receiver General, to examine the Tongan Treasury records and to recommend measures to keep the Government solvent.²² He found the task well nigh impossible, for, as he reported to Gordon:

I could not ascertain that any statement of account for any year, or for any part of any year had even been prepared, or any balance struck.²³

Part of the trouble was owing to the dilatory collection of taxes, for McGregor discovered that the revenue from the poll tax varied enormously from year to year, and that in no year did it bear any relation to the number of taxpayers.²⁴ The collection of license fees had been equally perfunctory. He reported:

Licenses have fallen off from £518:8:6 in 1876 to £263:16:3 in 1879, as I am assured, because people are not compelled with sufficient strictness to apply for them.²⁵

22 Gordon to Earl Granville, 29 March 1880, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.98.

23 McGregor to Gordon, 14 February 1880, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.98, enc.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

By 1880 it was apparent that the Government was heavily in debt, but because of the inadequacy of the records the extent of the indebtedness was difficult to estimate. Blyth risked a guess in July 1880:

I heard today, on the authority of Mr Miller (late Secretary) that \$33,000 is the extent of the obligations of the Tongan Government, chiefly for salaries unpaid to officials running over two years.²⁶

Baker attacked the problem of the finances with determination. His first measure was a piece of financial wizardry. At Baker's request the 1880 Parliament declared the Chilean silver dollar legal currency in Tonga, and officially valued it at 4/- English.²⁷ Intrinsically the dollar was only worth 3/3 English,²⁸ but Godeffroys undertook to exchange government silver, at its nominal value, for bills of exchange on Sydney, Auckland and San Francisco.²⁹ Thus the Tongan Government's holdings in silver dollars, and future tax revenue collected in the same

-
- 26 Blyth to Gordon, 20 July 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.378.
- 27 Tongan Order in Council, 3 August 1870, reported in F.O.C.P. 5341, no.353, enc.3.
- 28 Thurston to the Earl of Rosebery, 23 July 1886, F.O.C.P. 5341, no.353.
- 29 Count Von Steubel to Prince Bismarck, 8 September 1884, 'German Interests in the South Seas, A Collection of Documents Presented to the German Reichstag in December 1884', p.17, printed in Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives, New Zealand 1885, vol.I, A9.

currency, were appreciated very considerably. The measure also had important secondary consequences. Godeffroys had given Baker valuable support, both during the investigations of the previous decade and over the affair of 'Unga's funeral, and by making the Chilean silver legal tender Baker was able to do them a favour in return. Godeffroys were the sole importers of the coins, and made a profit of about 20 per cent on the transaction.³⁰ Furthermore, as the coin was not accepted outside Tonga, private traders had to exchange the coins for Godeffroys' bills of exchange, on which the firm charged a further 5 per cent 'drawback'.³¹ The English traders were therefore seriously disadvantaged, for they were forced to accept at nominal value a currency on which they lost about 25 per cent when purchasing from ports outside Tonga.³² But as the English traders had been his most persistent adversaries, Baker was not unhappy about their difficulties.

Baker then turned his attention to the taxes. The 1875 Parliament had established the

30 Official Report of the German Consulate General for the Western Pacific for the Year 1883 (Berlin 1884), quoted in Thurston to Rosebery, 23 July 1886, F.O.C.P. 5341, no.353.

31 Ibid.

32 Thurston to Rosebery, 23 July 1886.

poll tax at \$7 per annum for every adult male,³³ and had imposed a further indirect tax by declaring all town lands to be the property of the government, and charging a rental (evidently at the rate of \$1) to the tenant.³⁴ In 1880 the Parliament returned all town lands to the nobles and abolished the rents payable on them;³⁵ thereafter the 2/- per annum payable to the noble for an 'api 'uta' was the only rent Tongans would pay.³⁶ To compensate the government for the loss of revenue which the surrender of the town lands entailed, the 1880 Parliament raised the poll tax to \$8 per annum.³⁷ This made no difference to the Tongans for they paid the same amount as before, but after

33 Act No 50 of the Kingdom of Tonga, passed 4 November 1875, quoted McGregor to Gordon, 14 February 1880, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.98, enc.

34 For the 1877 financial year the income from rents on town lands was \$6,500: Maudslay to Salisbury, 23 January 1879, Consular No. 1, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.44, enc.11; from the same source it is revealed that the number of tax payers in that year was 6,815; the most likely inference from these figures is that each tax payer received a town allotment for which a rent of \$1 per annum was charged, although a variety of other conclusions are possible.

35 'His Majesty King George's Speech at the Prorogation of the Legislative Assembly', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.6, 10 November 1880, p.3.

36 Below, p.264.

37 'Schedule of Taxes', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.1, 1 September 1880.

1880 they paid it all as poll tax. The real change Baker introduced was in the thoroughness with which he collected the taxes. McGregor had noted in 1879:

[The poll tax] deficiency from year to year and its great variability in amount indicate clearly that some means more perfect than those at present in force should be employed to secure its collection.³⁸

It is not clear what 'more perfect means' Baker used to collect the taxes, but its effect on the revenue was very marked. In 1879 the poll tax had provided a revenue of £5,880;³⁹ when Baker published his first account of revenue and expenditure it was revealed that for the financial year ending in September 1881 the poll tax had yielded nearly £13,000.⁴⁰ There were, naturally, some murmurs from the Tongans and the British Consul reported in September 1881:

The discontent amongst the people generally cannot be overrated, and many of them are even neglecting to make plantations saying that they would rather go hungry than work and afterwards have the fruits of their labour taken by the Government.⁴¹

This account, however, seems greatly exaggerated.

38 McGregor to Gordon, 14 February 1880, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.98, enc.

39 Ibid.

40 'Financial Statement of the Government of Tonga.... 30 September 1881', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.10, 5 October 1881.

41 Symonds to Gordon, 15 September 1881, F3/12/81, no.17.

Tongan Wesleyans gave freewill offerings of \$10, \$20 and even \$50 at the annual missionary collections, and in comparison the annual tax of \$8 (£1.12.0) seems neither harsh nor unreasonable.

On the other hand Baker introduced new license fees which applied almost exclusively to Europeans, and these were certainly harsh and in some cases prohibitory. The 1880 Parliament decreed that wholesale traders were to pay \$70 per annum for a license and retail traders \$25 per annum; a license to sell liquor to other Europeans cost \$100 per annum, to own a billiard table \$30, a buggy \$5, a horse \$1.⁴² Perhaps the most vindictive of the new fees was the \$100 per annum required from an auctioneer. Robert Hanslip, Maudslay's interpreter and the chief prosecution witness at the 1879 investigation, was the only auctioneer in Tonga, and the whole profits from his business hardly covered the license fee.⁴³ When Blyth pointed this out to Baker the fee was reduced to \$50, a mere

42 'Schedule of Licenses', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.1, September 1880.

43 Blyth to Gordon, diary letter dated 20 July 1880, entry for July 31: 'The auctioneer's license, \$100 a year, is rather rough on Hanslip. He is the only auctioneer and his business won't cover that large sum'. Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.385.

50 per cent of Hanslip's profits.⁴⁴ Baker was not a generous victor.

Baker's financial measures were completely successful in restoring solvency to the Tongan Government. Despite an enlarged expenditure, when a balance was struck in September 1881 the revenue exceeded expenditure by nearly \$10,000,⁴⁵ and when the next Parliament sat in September 1882 the King could inform the representatives:

You will...be pleased to learn that the revenue of the Government is increased, and that the large debt of the Government, of which we were so afraid, has almost all been liquidated, and for this it is right for us to thank the Premier, in his successful steering of our vessel and the great work he has accomplished.⁴⁶

A second problem which faced Baker in July 1880 was the question of land tenure. In 1862 the chiefs had been ordered to distribute land to their people, though the size of the holding was left to the chiefs to determine, the King merely advising that the amount of land given should be proportional to the size of the tenants' family.

44 In the 'Schedule of Licenses' printed in the Tonga Government Gazette of 1 September 1880 the license fee for an auctioneer is stated as \$50 p.a. Presumably this reduction was made as a result of Blyth's representations.

45 'Financial Statement of the Government of Tonga.... 30 September 1881'.

46 'His Majesty's Speech at the Opening of the Legislative Assembly', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.12, 25 October 1882, p.4

Once land had been granted to a tenant, his right of tenure was guaranteed by the Government. A considerable modification of this system was envisaged by the 1875 constitution, which divided all plantation lands into tofi'a or inheritances belonging either to a noble or to the King. Tofi'a holders were to lease lands to individual tenants at rates specified by the government for terms of 21, 50, or 99 years, but no regulation of the size of holdings was made, and the chief was under no obligation to lease lands to his followers unless he so desired. In fact, owing no doubt to Baker's preoccupation with his personal affairs after 1876, the delineation of tofi'a was never carried out and not a single lease was ever issued. The people continued to work their traditional lands, but because of the uncertainties introduced by the new laws, ceased to improve them or replant their coconut groves.⁴⁷

47 Maudslay described the effects of the 1875 legislation in a letter to Salisbury in 1879: 'The Constitution of 1875 claimed and seized all town-lands as Government property, and left the Chiefs to gather a small rental from the bush lands on which the people have their plantations. The rent is never paid, and not a single lease has ever been issued.... From the first intimation of the intended readjustment of the land system to the present time the people have shown the utmost dislike to the alterations, and absolutely no improvements in cultivation have been made.... Experience of the last three years has thus shown the new system to

It was apparent that the 1875 legislation was inadequate to bring about the situation Baker desired, namely a peasantry with secure tenure of portions of land adequate to satisfy their needs and free from chiefly demands and encumbrances, and a nobility with holdings large enough to satisfy their relatively higher demands for status and remuneration. It was to implement this policy that Baker accepted the portfolio of Minister for Lands in 1880, and the Parliament session of that year, under Baker's direction, began reconsidering the whole land question. Deliberations were not fully completed during the sitting and many matters were left over to be resolved by the next Parliament, but several alterations, including the payment of a stipend of \$100 per annum to nobles, the elevation of ten additional chiefs to the nobility, and the surrender of the town lands by the Government to the nobles, were accepted.⁴⁸ The next Parliament,

footnote 47 (continued)

be useless and unworkable, and it has only succeeded in unsettling the people and checking the trade and progress of the islands'. Maudslay to Salisbury, 23 January 1879, No.1 Consular, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.44.

48 'His Majesty King George's speech at the Prorogation of the Legislative Assembly', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.6, 10 November 1880; Blyth to Gordon, diary letter dated 20 July 1880, entry for July 31, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.384.

which met in September 1882, completed the revision of the land laws, and its resolutions were embodied in The Act to Regulate Hereditary Lands, published in November 1882,⁴⁹ and the revised constitution which was published in April 1883.⁵⁰

Under the new laws the tofi'a of the thirty nobles and the six chiefs, who though not nobles, were granted hereditary lands, were delineated and all lands not specifically granted were declared to be the tofi'a of the King. Each tax-paying Tongan was to be granted by his chief an 'api kolo and an 'api 'uta measuring 100 fathoms by 100 fathoms (8¼ acres). In Hihifo and Ha'apai, where land was comparatively scarce, an 'api 'uta of 50 fathoms by 50 fathoms was allowed. In return for his lands, which were to be hereditary, the security of tenure being guaranteed by the Government, each landholder was to pay two whillings per annum rent to the holder of the tofi'a in which he resided. No Tongan could possess more than one 'api 'uta or 'api kolo and, as in earlier legislation, surplus lands of a tofi'a could not be leased to Europeans without the consent of Parliament.

The new land regulations made a very significant contribution to the stability of Tongan society, for nobles and commoners were each

49 Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.14, 22 November 1882.

50 F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.19.

guaranteed a secure place consistent with their levels of aspiration. The only Tongans who had reason to resent the laws were those minor chiefs who had chiefly aspirations but no title of nobility. One of the results of the 1875 land laws had been to threaten the status of the minor title holders, foto tehina and kau matāpule, and it is probable that one of the reasons for the non-implementation of those laws had been the opposition and obstruction from members of this group, from whom the ranks of government positions were mostly filled. The new laws made a much more serious attack on their position, for not only was the basis for the authority of minor chiefs over their people destroyed, but the amount of land they could hold was reduced to 8¼ acres, exactly the same size as that of their most lowly retainer. Naturally the foto tehina and kau matāpule vigorously opposed the new laws, and even before they were promulgated the kau matāpule of Mu'a, evidently motivated by the rumoured changes, began a movement of opposition which grew to very serious proportions.⁵¹

Another policy which Baker had advocated while he was a missionary was the transformation of the Wesleyan mission into an independent church, and as Premier this matter also received his attention. Church independence, like political

51 Below, Chapter 9.

independence, was a matter of deep concern for Tupou, and he had expressed great satisfaction when the Tongan Model Deed had been signed in 1875, believing that by this instrument his church had been established. The recall of Baker in 1879, against Tupou's wishes and contrary to the verdict of the Tongan District Meeting, had demonstrated that the church was not in fact independent, but in all important matters controlled from Sydney. The King's response to this revelation had been to cancel all the Wesleyan leases. 'Unga wrote on his behalf:

His Majesty would remind you that he signed his name to the leases, believing that the said deed [Tonga Model Deed] had become the law and rule of the management of the Wesleyan Church in Tonga; and if it be not abided by...you must forgive him when he says that the leases shall at once become null and void.⁵²

In a second letter 'Unga outlined the King's demands:

His Majesty wishes the Tongan Church to be the same as the Church in Sydney...not to be the same as Samoa and Fiji, and for the Church in Tonga to bear all the responsibilities that the Church in Sydney bears.⁵³

52 'Unga to Chapman and Clarke, 6 October 1879, Letters and Correspondence in re Tongan Affairs and the Request of H.M. King George for Tonga to be made an Independent District, October 1879, p.3.

53 'Unga to Chapman and Clarke, 17 October 1879, Letters and Correspondence in re Tongan Affairs and the Request of H.M. King George for Tonga to be made an Independent District, p.7.

Baker had promised the 1880 Conference that he would try to calm down the excited feelings in Tonga, and he did in fact persuade the King not to withdraw the Wesleyan leases. Tupou however continued adamant about having an independent church and at the opening of the 1880 Parliament he told the representatives:

...my mind is still the same, for the Church of Tonga to be an independent Church; and the words I uttered I still utter - I and my family will not again contribute to the Foreign Missions until Tonga is a Church.⁵⁴

Baker, as Premier, moved the Address in Reply assuring Parliament's support for the King in his efforts to win ecclesiastical independence. In December Tupou published a proclamation forbidding all government employees and all his relatives to subscribe to the mission or help it in any way, and warned: 'If this proclamation does not have the desired effect I shall take other measures'.⁵⁵

In Sydney the news that Baker had accepted government office, and that he had lent moral support to Tupou in the moves against the mission, caused considerable indignation, and he was summoned to appear before the Committee of Discipline to answer for his behaviour. Baker declined to appear, claiming that as he was not a missionary

54 'His Majesty King George's Speech at the Opening of the Legislative Assembly', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.6, 10 November 1880.

55 F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.13.

the Committee had no authority over him. However he did present himself before the Conference which met in Sydney in 1881, and at this meeting his conduct was denounced. It was obvious that he would be expelled, so to avoid this Baker tendered his resignation, the record of the Conference noting: 'Having accepted office under the Tongan Government S.W. Baker voluntarily retires from our work'.⁵⁶ But Baker returned to Tonga bereft of all sympathy and affection for the cause for which he had worked for twenty years. He had not been unfrocked, but only his resignation, tendered most reluctantly, had prevented it.

The 1881 Conference also decided to recall Watkin, who had returned to Tonga in 1879 to fill the office of Chairman vacated by Baker. The Conference decided that Watkin was too much under the influence of his friend and erstwhile superior, Baker, and appointed him to the village of Shoalhaven in New South Wales. In his stead they appointed Moulton, Baker's most tireless opponent and personal enemy, who had returned to Tonga from England in June 1880 and had taken up his old post of master at Tupou College.⁵⁷ Watkin received word of his recall early in March 1881, and began packing. The King regarded Watkin's

56 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.5.

57 Ibid.

recall as a personal affront, but took no action. Then on 2 April 1881 Baker returned to Tonga. On 5 April Tupou wrote to Watkin ordering him to stay⁵⁸ and on 28 May Baker sent a telegram to the General [All-Australian] Conference then meeting in Adelaide:

King and Chiefs enraged at Watkin's recall. Decided to establish national church and get Watkin as first Minister.... This the King's ultimatum: Tonga to be an independent district like Auckland; Watkin to be reinstated; Tonga to be attached to New Zealand. Grant this, peace. Reject, one secession. Don't be deceived. The secession will be universal and popular.⁵⁹

In fact this dramatic threat was not necessary, for the General Conference, which had

58 The sequence of events and dates are given in Symonds to Gordon, 25 July 1881, F3/12/81, no.15. Symonds claimed that the King showed no vexation at Watkin's recall until Baker arrived in Tonga. Waterhouse however gave a slightly different account: 'On returning home from the General Conference, the Rev. B. Chapman, secretary of missions, found waiting for him letters from the Friendly Islands stating that the King on hearing of Mr Watkin's removal was at first much displeased, regarding it as a blow aimed at himself; but on hearing Mr Moulton's explanations, had expressed himself satisfied. When Mr Baker however again visited Tonga the King returned to his former opinion'; Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.6; the text of Tupou's letter to Watkin ordering him to remain in Tonga is given in Koe Boobooi, vol.III, no.1, July 1881.

59 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.6.

finished its sittings before the receipt of Baker's telegram, had already decided 'that after 31st December 1881 the Friendly Islands District be no longer under the Board of Missions, but that it be a district in connection with the New South Wales and Queensland Conference',⁶⁰ and in response to a panicky letter by Moulton, the President of the New South Wales and Queensland Conference had overruled the decision of his own Conference and appointed Watkin to the vacant station at Ha'apai.⁶¹ Baker's demands had not been fully met, for Tonga remained attached to Sydney instead of Auckland, and Watkin, though retained in Tonga, was still deposed from the office of Chairman; but the compromise was sufficient to prevent Baker from putting his secession threat into effect. It was not sufficient, however, to prevent him from putting into operation a plan that the King had long contemplated, the nationalisation of the schools.

As early as 1874 the King had demanded that the Wesleyan mission surrender its schools to the Government. The resolutions of the Quarterly Meeting of Chiefs held in Tonga on 24 March 1874, endorsed by Tupou and forwarded by Miller to the Conference, included the following:

60 Ibid., p.5.

61 Ibid., pp.5, 6.

Whose are the schools? Are they not the schools of the missionaries only? The missionaries arrange and rule over them; the Government has nothing whatever to do with them; Therefore this meeting says, give up the schools to the Government and then the Government would assist in a manner worthy of the Government.⁶²

At the time Baker had given guarded support for the proposal; by 1881, influenced no doubt by the treatment he had received from the Conference, he supported it whole-heartedly.

In June 1881 it was proclaimed that all subsidies paid by the Government to the Wesleyan schools would be discontinued, and that the Government would set up its own primary schools under the personal supervision of Baker, who assumed the additional portfolio of Minister for Education. Attendance at the government schools was to be compulsory for all children between 5 and 16 years of age.⁶³ Furthermore, the establishment of a state run college, which all aspirants for government appointments would be required to attend, was announced.⁶⁴ The services of J.H. Roberts, a

62 Miller to the church in Sydney, 24 March 1874, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.11.

63 The 'Act Regulating the Schools' was not published until December 1882 (Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.15), but the changes were announced in June 1881: Koe Boobooi, vol.III, no.1, July 1881; see also Symonds to Gordon, 25 July 1881, F3/12/81, no.15.

64 Symonds to Gordon, 7 September 1882, F3/12/82, no.11.

Victorian schoolmaster and an acquaintance of Baker's from his early days on the Victorian goldfields, were obtained to fill the position of 'professor' at the new institution. He arrived in Tonga on 23 August 1882,⁶⁵ and three weeks later the Tongan Government College was formally inaugurated.⁶⁶

The taking over of the schools marked a significant turning point in the relations between Baker and the Wesleyan authorities. Hitherto he had confined himself to polemics, but the Schools Act demonstrated that he was capable of deeds as well as words. He had chosen his ground carefully. Moulton's prestige depended largely on his reputation as a teacher, and with the eclipse of Tupou College, which was to become solely a theological training institution, his influence began to decline. However, Moulton had little room for complaint because Tupou College had been set up specifically to train Tongan clergy, and had only acquired its more general functions through Moulton's personal authority. Similarly, the Methodists in New South Wales, who were the most ardent opponents of state aid to denominational schools in that colony, found it difficult to argue with conviction against the abolition of state aid in Tonga. Baker therefore won his first

65 Ibid.

66 Roberts, Tamai, p.99.

skirmish with little difficulty, but the church began making preparations for further conflict.

Another policy which Baker had developed while a missionary, and which as Premier he could implement more effectively, was that of making European residents subject to Tongan law and amenable to Tongan courts. The 1875 constitution had declared: 'There shall be but one law in Tonga, one for the Chiefs and commoners, and Europeans and Tongese',⁶⁷ but in practise the Tongan courts had had little success in enforcing judgements made against Europeans. For instance Phillip Payne had received £44 from a Tongan for a draught horse some time in 1876, but had neither delivered the horse nor repaid the money, despite a ruling against him by the Tongan Supreme Court in November 1877.⁶⁸ Cases like this made the police very reluctant to press charges against Europeans. Under Baker's administration things began to change. An English trader at Mu'a, whose real name was Clarke but who had altered it to Von Hagen for what he described as 'trading purposes',⁶⁹ was known to operate a profitable sideline in smuggling. Baker haled him before the Supreme Court, obtained a verdict, and then put the onus on the British Consul

67 The Constitution of Tonga (1875), clause 4.

68 W.G. Tubou Malohi to the Chief, the British Consul, 1 April 1880, F3/2/80, no.9.

69 F.O.C.P. 5527, no.154, enc.1.

to extract the fine.⁷⁰ Von Hagen was a ne'er-do-well with a talent for obscene language and a penchant for indecent exposure⁷¹ so the case aroused little indignation among the Europeans, but Baker also challenged E.W. Parker, the grazier on 'Eua and the most substantial European settler in Tonga. Parker was a man of wealth and education;⁷² he had been nominated by the other residents in 1876 to fill the post of British Consul,⁷³ and

70 Baker to Gordon, 15 February 1882, Despatches from the Consul-General to the Vice Consul, Tonga, 1879-1935, 1882 file, item no.3, Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva [cited henceforth as: F3/10/82, no.3, and similarly for other files and items in the series].

71 Watkin to Leefe, 4 June 1887, F3/2/87, no.334: 'I take the liberty of addressing you for the purpose of bringing under your notice the disgraceful conduct of Mr Von Hagen. This said individual on Wednesday morning last between 11 and 12 o'clock did indecently expose his person in a public place and using at the same time most unbecoming language'.

72 Trood, Island Reminiscences, p.74: '...Walter Parker, ...and his brother Samuel, belonging to a first class English mercantile family, who brought to Tonga in the sixties a capital of several thousand pounds which they invested in a large sheep station at the island of Eua near Tongatabu'.

73 European Residents in Tonga to Consul Layard, 18 February 1876, W.P.H.C. Inward Corresp. (General), 143/1883, enc.

probably would have been appointed had the King not informed Gordon that 'the appointment of this gentleman...would be very unacceptable'.⁷⁴ Tupou looked on the nomination with disfavour because for many years there had been an altercation between the Tongan Government and Parker Brothers, the latter claiming that the 'Eua people continually butchered and ate their sheep.'⁷⁵ In November 1880 Parker made a claim for £13,669 against the Government as compensation for 23,338 sheep which he claimed had been stolen between 1869 and 1880. He arrived at this figure by comparing the number of sheep he actually had in 1880 with the number he calculated he ought to have had if the flock of 5,580 sheep bought in 1869 had multiplied unmolested.⁷⁶ To enquire into the matter Baker set up a Royal Commission, which brought down a verdict in September 1881 that 'the Tongan Government disclaimed responsibility for acts done by individuals', and that therefore compensation would not be considered. Ngū wrote to Symonds,

74 J.P. Miller, Secretary to the Tongan Government, to Gordon, 29 March 1876, F3/43, no.9.

75 E.W. Parker to Gordon, 24 October 1877, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 8/1877.

76 Symonds to T. Tu'uhetoka, Minister of Police, 6 November 1880; Symonds to His Majesty, King of Tonga, 22 November 1880, both from Tongan Government Blue Book in re Eua Sheep, n.d., copy in W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 193/1883, enc.

the British Consul through whom the claim had been submitted, in wording that was unmistakably Baker's:

His Majesty thinks that even when Jacob sheperded Laban's flock on the plains of Padanaram they hardly equalled your calculations.... His Majesty cannot but say that in his opinion the whole case is a trumped up affair...which would, if it had taken place in any civilised land, be considered a disgrace to all parties concerned.⁷⁷

It was Baker's determination to impose Tonga's laws on its European settlers that brought him into serious collision with Sir Arthur Gordon. Of course Baker opposed Gordon on purely personal grounds as well, and this personal antagonism was probably responsible for many of the incidents that marred British-Tongan relationships in the early days of his Premiership. At the funeral of 'Unga, for instance, the Captain and officers of the German ship Nautilus were prominently placed while the British Consul was relegated to the background. Similarly, when Parliament opened in July Blyth complained that his position in the order of precedence had been established below all the Tongan dignatories, the German Consul and even the Captain and officers of the German warship Hyena, which had brought the German Consul to Nuku'alofa.⁷⁸ Baker's attitude was, moreover, communicated to the

77 W.G. Tubou Malohi to Symonds, 15 September 1881, Tongan Government Blue Book in re Eua Sheep.

78 Blyth to Gordon, 20 July 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.378.

Tongans and on 4 August 1880 Blyth reported:

One of Mr Symonds' [the consular secretary] horses was badly wounded yesterday outside the Consulate fence, apparently by a hoe on the quarter. All Mr Baker's acts are so evidently done in bravado and so manifestly intended to 'slight' everything British, that we are not disposed to regard this last outrage as without significance.⁷⁹

Another example of Baker's hostility towards anything connected with Gordon was his treatment of Dr Bey. Gordon and Tupou had agreed in November 1879 that a qualified medical man should be procured for Tonga, and the High Commissioner offered a subsidy to help pay his salary. Gordon related the sequel to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

The proportion of these payments was never settled nor was the understanding reduced to writing. Pending this I made arrangements with Dr Bey for at once commencing medical work in Tonga, where there was no medical practitioner whatever, and where the presence of one, on grounds of humanity, imperatively called for. On the return of Mr Baker to Tonga it became evident that the Tonga Government would not complete the arrangements it had initiated, and could not be looked to for its share of whatever remuneration was given to Dr Bey. In these circumstances he was, of course, recalled from Tonga.⁸⁰

79 Blyth to Gordon, diary letter dated 20 July 1880, entry for 4 August 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.385.

80 Gordon to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 9 May 1881, F.O.58, vol.176.

Incidents such as these can be attributed to Baker's personal animosity towards Gordon, but his opposition to the British treaty stemmed from his fears that the extra-territoriality clauses it contained would inhibit the jurisdiction of Tongan courts over British subjects. The treaty had been negotiated in November 1879, while Baker was absent from Tonga, but its ratification was left to the 1880 Parliament. When the Parliament came to discuss the treaty it became clear that Baker opposed ratification. Blyth reported:

...we are told that when Baker proposed that it [the treaty] should be considered in Parliament, he made some very unfavourable comparisons, disparagingly, and honourable members refused to discuss it, leaving it for His Majesty's decision.⁸¹

Blyth's reports convinced Gordon that Baker intended to dissuade the King from ratifying the treaty, and in July 1880 Gordon sought permission from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to warn Tupou 'that Her Majesty cannot permit him to offer Her the affront of refusing to carry out his promise to ratify the treaty'.⁸² The case was difficult because the British Government had been dissatisfied with the original

81 Blyth to Gordon, diary letter dated 20 July 1880, entry for 31 July 1880, Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, p.385.

82 Gordon to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 31 July 1880, F.O.58, vol.168.

text of the treaty and required further time to consider a re-draft. Tongan agreement had therefore to be sought for an alteration in the wording of the treaty and for an extension of time, and Gordon realised that this would provide an excuse for a Tongan refusal. In September Gordon wrote to Tupou asking that the ratification date be postponed,⁸³ and in reply received an extremely evasive answer. Tupou wrote:

I am glad to hear that Your Excellency and friends in Fiji are well. I and my friends in Tonga are enjoying good health also. My letter is short. There is no need for it being long as it might only burden you.⁸⁴

However, when H.F. Symonds (who had replaced Blyth in August 1880 as British Vice-Consul) sought from the King the purport of this strange reply, he was told that, because the English Government had had ample time to prepare the Act of Ratification, and had not done so, the Tongan Government would refuse to grant the required extension of time.⁸⁵

On receipt of Symond's despatch Gordon wrote a curt letter to Tupou remonstrating against 'so gross an act of discourtesy to the Queen' and

83 The original of Gordon's letter is lost, but a summary of its contents is given in Symonds to Gordon, 30 September 1880, F3/12/80, no.13.

84 Tupou to Gordon, 30 September 1880, F.O.58, vol.168.

85 Symonds to Gordon, 30 September 1880, F3/2/80 no.13.

warning of 'the most serious consequences' which could follow a Tongan refusal to ratify the treaty.⁸⁶ H.M.S. Alert was despatched to Tonga to carry the High Commissioner's letter.⁸⁷ Six days later Gordon received telegraphic instructions from London to warn Tupou that a refusal to ratify the treaty would be considered as 'an unfriendly act' and to notify him that 'he would do well to consider seriously whether it is for his interest to offend a powerful nation which has always behaved to him in a friendly manner'.⁸⁸

On receiving official instructions Gordon sent to Tonga J.B. Thurston, the Secretary to the High Commission, aboard yet another warship, H.M.S. Danae, to press the warning in more explicit terms.⁸⁹ The Alert had been delayed on the voyage, and arrived at Nuku'alofa only twenty-four hours before

86 Gordon to Tupou, 9 October 1880, Despatches from the High Commissioner to the Deputy Commissioner or Agent, Tonga, 1879-1937, file for 1880, item no.17, Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva [cited henceforth as F3/18/80, no.17, and similarly for other files and items in the series].

87 Ibid.

88 Text of telegram given in: Kimberly to Foreign Office, 16 October 1880, F.O.58, vol.172.

89 Thurston to Gordon, 11 November 1880, F.O.58, vol.168; Gordon sent Symonds further instructions on H.M.S. Danae ordering him to 'suspend all further relations with the Tongan Government' should Thurston's mission prove unsuccessful.

the Danae, so that when Thurston arrived his words were backed by the formidable authority of two British warships riding at anchor in the lagoon.⁹⁰ Moreover Baker, the real cause of the King's reticence to ratify, was absent in New Zealand, having sailed on 13 August.⁹¹ Under these circumstances Tupou assured Thurston 'that there had only been some misunderstanding about the treaty, nothing more', and an exchange of notes postponing the ratification was hastily arranged.⁹²

Shortly after this Gordon left Fiji for Wellington to take up his new office as Governor of New Zealand,⁹³ and on the way passed through Auckland. Baker was in Auckland and, having apparently received news of events in Tonga and realising that he had no arguments to match the High Commissioner's gunboats, he decided to seek an interview with Gordon in the hope of arranging some modus vivendi. Accordingly a meeting was

90 Thurston to Gordon, 11 November 1880, F.O.58, vol.168.

91 Symonds to Gordon, 1 September 1880, F3/12/80, no.11.

92 Thurston to Gordon, 11 November 1880, F.O.58, vol.168.

93 Although Gordon relinquished the office of Governor of Fiji, he retained his position as High Commissioner and Consul General for the Western Pacific, and hence his control over the consular official in Tonga and his vital interest in Tongan affairs.

arranged for 25 November 1880.

The meeting between Gordon and Baker was highly significant, for it was the first occasion on which the two had met, although they had been bitter adversaries for three years. The talks continued for two days, and by the time they concluded an understanding had been reached. Gordon admitted that meeting Baker was entirely different from hearing about him, and agreed to co-operate with him in furthering the interests of Tonga for, as he explained to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:

I would frankly avow that, considering his great influence, I would rather work with him than against him.⁹⁴

Gordon was able to convince Baker that while Britain could not permit German influence to predominate in Tonga, she had no intention of annexing it herself. He assured Baker:

Her Majesty's Government...sincerely desired the independence of Tonga and the welfare of its people, but I [Gordon] whose chief thought had long been how to save and secure natives from white domination, probably desired them even more earnestly.⁹⁵

With regard to the extra-territoriality provisions in the British treaty, Gordon pointed out that they gave the Tongan Government a greater measure

94 Gordon to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 30 December 1880, F.O.58, vol.168.

95 Ibid.

of control over British subjects than it had had before, for under the treaty British subjects were made amenable to the 'Municipal Law of Tonga'. This, Gordon explained, did not mean 'the regulations of a Town Board', as Baker 'in his ignorance of public affairs' believed,⁹⁶ but all local Tongan laws not cognisable under British law. This provision, he explained, was more liberal than Britain allowed either China or Turkey in her treaties with those countries.

With this misunderstanding removed Baker was reassured. He promised in return to give back his Knight of the Red Eagle (3rd class), and to refrain from actively promoting German interests in Tonga. As an earnest of his bona fides he promised that the legislation which Gordon had suggested in 1878, and which, through Baker's influence, Tupou had rejected in 1879, would be resubmitted to the Privy Council for approval.⁹⁷ Baker kept his word on this undertaking and in October 1881 he reported to Gordon that all the recommendations had been approved: debts recoverable from Tongans had been limited to £3 per person, the tapa law had been suspended, the divorce law had been modified, a subsidy of £500 per annum had been granted towards the cost of a steamer to operate between Auckland and Tonga, a more efficient system

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

of bookkeeping had been introduced, and it had been decided to publish six-monthly accounts of government revenue and expenditure in the Tonga Government Gazette.⁹⁸ A little later Baker informed Gordon that another of his recommendations had been accepted and that the services of a qualified medical practitioner had been secured to act as medical and quarantine officer under the Tonga Government.⁹⁹

In May 1881 Thurston again visited Tonga to seek Tupou's agreement to the altered wording of the treaty, and the cordial reception he was given clearly indicated that the reconciliation between Baker and Gordon was complete. Thurston reported to Gordon:

I deem it my duty to inform Your Excellency that His Majesty assented to the proposed alteration without hesitation, and that the Reverend Shirley W. Baker, who as Your Excellency is aware has been appointed Premier of the Government and Minister of Foreign Affairs, gave an active and cordial assistance in expediting the business that brought me hither.¹⁰⁰

In April 1882 Baker visited Gordon in Wellington, and told the readers of Koe Boobooi that the Governor

98 Baker to Gordon, 26 October 1881, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 201/1881.

99 Baker to Gordon, 8 March 1882, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 38/1882.

100 Thurston to Gordon, 17 May 1881, F.O.58, vol.177.

had showed 'great love' to their Premier, and had treated him in a 'chieflike manner' at a dinner at which Lady Gordon and other 'big chiefs' were present.¹⁰¹ Finally, in June 1882, when Gordon visited Tonga to exchange ratifications of the treaty, the formalities were conducted smoothly and amicably.¹⁰² It seemed that the quarrel between Baker and the British authorities was finally buried.

The first two years of Baker's administration in Tonga had been very fruitful. The state finances had been reorganised and placed on a secure footing; the land laws had been simplified and embodied in a revised and more workable constitution; a new state-run education system had been implemented; the Wesleyan Church in Tonga had been granted a considerable measure of independence including complete control over its funds; and finally, amicable relations had been resumed between Gordon and Baker, the result of which had been the ratification of the treaty by which Tonga's independence and sovereignty was finally recognised by Britain. These were very concrete gains, but they had not been won without cost. In the process

101 The Fiji Times, 14 June 1882, letter from 'a correspondent' in Tonga, 25 April 1882, quotes extracts from Koe Boobooi.

102 The Fiji Times, 12 July 1882, letter from 'a correspondent' in Tonga dated 5 July 1882.

of achieving his objects Baker had alienated the Wesleyan body in Australia and an influential group of minor chiefs in Tonga, while the animosity which Moulton and the traders had always felt towards him was acerbated and intensified. By mid-1882 the fruits of this hostility were already beginning to ripen.

CHAPTER 9

THE MU'A PARLIAMENT

DURING his first two years in office Baker had succeeded in bringing order and stability to Tonga but, on the other hand, had aggravated the opposition from the traders, alienated the Wesleyans and created a new focus for opposition among the Tongan minor title holders. While this opposition remained multipartite and desultory it was of little consequence, but towards the end of 1881 the opposition factions, each with their own separate reasons for opposing Baker, coalesced into a united front, and formed an opposition party of considerable significance. The resulting struggle was bitter, and Baker was never fully to recover from its effects for, although he was to maintain his position in Tonga for several years afterwards, they were years of makeshift responses, and diminishing prestige.

The dissension was sparked off by a minor incident which occurred in July 1881. Six young chiefs of high rank had violated one of Baker's laws, probably that prohibiting fornication, and to avoid the consequences of their transgressions they applied to H.E. Symonds, the British Vice-Consul and Deputy Commissioner, asking if they might take the oath of allegiance to Queen Victoria and

become British subjects.¹ They assured Symonds:

...it was not that they were disloyal to their King, but to Mr Baker who made laws to suit himself, and was grinding down the people whom he professed to call free.²

Symonds naturally refused the request and the matter was dropped. News of the incident, however, reached the Government, and four of the young chiefs, who were officers in the militia, were arraigned before a court martial on charge of high treason. It seems that the intention of the Government was to frighten the young men into making a public recantation, but the youths defied the court and reiterated their demands. The court dared not sentence youths of such high rank to execution, so the charges were dropped.³

The protest of the young chiefs was merely a dramatic gesture by a group of high-spirited young aristocrats who resented the prohibitions of the rigorous Tongan social laws, and in itself the incident was unimportant. However the demonstration of the weakness of the Government which it provided was the stimulus which started a new movement of much greater significance. This was the Mu'a Parliament.

1 The Fiji Times, 14 December 1881, letter from R.S. Swanston, n.d.

2 Symonds to Gordon, 25 July 1881, F3/12/81, no.15.

3 Ibid.; the Fiji Times, 10 December 1881, 'Tonga, 20 Oct. 1881'.

The organisation which became known as the Mu'a Parliament began at a faikava in Mu'a attended by a number of minor chiefs and kau matāpule, many of whom bore personal grievances against Baker.⁴ For instance 'Usaia Tōpui, a member of Tungī's family and the most influential member of the group, had borrowed \$900 from the German firm and had expected to repay this sum from the income from his lands at Holonga.⁵ However, when Baker's land laws became operative Tōpui, not being a noble, could expect his lands to diminish to an 8½ acre 'api 'uta. He could thus anticipate utter ruin if Baker remained in office and the rumoured land redistribution became effective. Another member of the group, Tupouto'a, was in a similar plight. He was a chief of very high rank and had precedence over many who had been made nobles, but his title had not been included among the nobility. He had thus been relegated to the commonality, and could expect only an 8½ 'api 'uta as his inheritance. Two other members, Eliasa Leka, a matāpule, and 'Asaeli Tāufa (rank unknown), had been partners in a business enterprise which had borrowed money from Baker's bank in 1875. Their trading venture had failed after about eighteen months and Baker

4 The names of twenty-two leading members of the group were included in a petition to Queen Victoria in January 1882: F.O.58, vol.177.

5 Koe Boobooi, vol.III, no.2, September 1881.

had confiscated their stock, their horse and cart and even their town lands in settlement of the mortgage.⁶ Two other members, Tēvita Tonga, a matāpule, and Tēvita Valu, a minor chief, had held a piece of land which Baker required as a site for his new Government College, and as they held no title for the land, Baker had resumed it without compensation.⁷

Some members of the group opposed Baker because of his increasingly hostile attitude towards Moulton and the Wesleyan Church. Among these were probably Lavuso and Tonga, who were members of the staff of Tupou College, Tonga having been Acting Principal during Moulton's absence in England.⁸ Tōpui himself was a leading Wesleyan layman and had given evidence to Maudslay in 1878 about the Jubilee fakamisinale at Mu'a.⁹ But while individual members had special reasons for opposing Baker, the group as a whole had a common reason. All of them appear to have been holders of minor titles. The members were described

6 Statement of 'Asaeli Tāufa, 14 November 1878, F.O.C.P. 4285, no.46, enc.2.

7 Affidavit of Moulton, 22 October 1883, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 148/1883.

8 Moulton to Chapman, 3 May 1877, M.O.M.C., set iv, item 99.

9 Statement of Usaia Tofui [Tōpui]; n.d., F.O.C.P. 4285, no.45, enc.14.

by an observer as 'chiefly heads of families',¹⁰ which in Tongan terms meant 'ulumotu'a, and 'ulumotu'a were almost exclusively holders of minor titles, kau matāpule or foto tehina. These titles had held a secure place under the old régime with a sanction in the control of land. They all stood to suffer from the implementation of the land laws which Baker had proposed to the 1880 Parliament.

As was inevitable at such a faikava the discussions turned to Baker and his laws, but on this occasion the group decided to form a society to debate the questions which had been raised.¹¹ Tōpui was elected President, Leka was appointed Secretary, and a list of grievances was drawn up with a view to petitioning the King to have them redressed. Before a petition could be submitted, however, word of the affair reached the Government in Nuku'alofa.¹² Tupou took the matter very seriously, not so much because the group questioned the Government but because it came from Mu'a, the traditional centre of opposition to Nuku'alofa, and because it was connected with Tungī, Tupou's foremost rival. Tungī, the heir to the royal Tu'i Ha'atakalaua title, had for several years

10 The Fiji Times, 10 December 1881, letter from a correspondent in Nuku'alofa dated 20 October 1881.

11 Ibid.

12 Symonds to Gordon, 15 September 1881, F3/12/81, no.17.

opposed the policies of Tupou, especially those inspired by Baker. When Tupou nominated Baker as his Premier in 1880 instead of Tungi, the latter's fortunes had suffered a severe blow, but his prospects had suddenly improved with the death of Ma'afu in March 1881. Symonds explained the position in a letter to Gordon written at the time:

Maafu was the last of the elders of the Kanokobolu who could have succeeded the present King, and the family is represented now by Gu., [Ngu] the present Crown Prince. Although by act of Parliament Gu is appointed to succeed his grandfather, yet the people always looked upon Maafu as the rightful heir and successor, and had he lived until the death of King George and contested the throne the people would, to a man, have declared themselves for him. Although about 26 years of age Gu is, in reality, only a boy and very unpopular with the majority of the people, and should the King die before he, Gu, has attained in the eyes of the natives years of discretion, I feel sure that the people will never submit to be ruled by him, unless strong outside influence be brought to bear, and in default of any elder of the Kanokobolu family existing, will no doubt seek a king from the other race of hereditary rulers, the Haatakalaua family, the present head of which is Tungi, the speaker of the Legislative Assembly, one of the most powerful chiefs of the group.¹³

That Tungi's claim to the throne was a very real one was acknowledged in 1885, when he was formally recognised as successor after the immediate heirs

13 Symonds to Gordon, 10 April 1881, F3/12/81, no.7.

of Tupou through 'Unga.¹⁴ It seems likely that Tungī felt his place was before, and not after, 'Unga's children, but the chief obstacle in the way of any ambitions he might have entertained was Baker, Ngū's loyal supporter and the author of the constitution which had formally excluded Tungī from the succession. Tupou was thus very suspicious of any act by Tungī aimed at Baker, and noting that Tōpui was Tungī's nephew, that Leka was his matāpule and that the other members of the Mu'a society were mostly Tungī's relatives or dependent minor chiefs, he concluded that a rebellion was under way. A Privy Council meeting was held to discuss the matter and it is said that Baker, 'Ahome'e (the Chief Justice) and Tu'uhetoka (the Minister of Police) advised that an armed force should be sent to sack Mu'a,¹⁵ though this rumour was later emphatically denied.¹⁶ It was however finally decided to order Tungī to suppress the movement or accept the consequences. A messenger was accordingly sent to Mu'a to ask Tungī if he were tired of governing his people. If that were so, Tupou

14 The Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.35, 1885.

15 Memorandum by Symonds on the petition from the Mu'a society to Tupou, n.d., F3/43, no.22.

16 Affidavit of George Fatafehi, Tu'ipelekake, 8 November 1883, T.G.B.B. Containing a List of Charges, Brought by the Premier of Tonga ...Against the Rev. J.E Moulton, p.4.

assured him, 'he had only to say so and the Government soldiers would march against the rebels'.¹⁷

It is doubtful whether Tungī had actually encouraged the movement before September 1881, but the direct challenge issued by Tupou forced him to take a stand, and he took it with his own people in defiance of the Government. He dismissed the King's messenger with a firm assurance that 'he was not tired of governing his own people',¹⁸ and the society, now under Tungī's patronage, drew up a petition calling the King's attention to a number of grievances. To help in phrasing the petition Tōpui called on Robert Hanslip, a self-styled lawyer and one of the leaders of the British community.¹⁹ Hanslip had been fourteen years in Tonga, much of which had been spent at Mu'a as a trader.²⁰ He had married, or perhaps merely cohabited with, a Mu'a girl, and was a confidant of Tungī, who had given him an allotment on his own town section at Fasi, Nuku'alofa.²¹ Hanslip was an ardent supporter of Tungī's claim to the succession and probably hoped to establish himself as adviser if the latter

17 Symonds to Gordon, 15 September 1881, F3/12/81, no.17.

18 Ibid.

19 Affidavit of Robert Hanslip, 22 October 1883, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 148/1883, enc.1.

20 Ibid.

21 Information given by Feilo'akitau Kaho during an interview with the writer in Nuku'alofa, December 1963.

became King. He was also a close associate of E.W. Parker, whose legal affairs he handled, and a friend of the British Consul, Symonds, with whom he had been associated under Maudslay's consulship, the one as consular clerk, the other as consular interpreter. He had moreover been concerned in every attempt to dislodge Baker over the preceding six years. Once Hanslip had joined the movement it began to take shape as a united front, with the minor title holders, the Moulton faction, and the British traders uniting in opposition to Baker.

Hanslip helped Leka and Tōpui draw up the petition to the King,²² and, probably through his advice, the complaints made did not specifically refer to the problems of the minor title holders but to problems of more general interest: the extra \$1 per annum poll tax, the license fee of \$1 per annum on horses, and the 'different regulations pouring down upon us like a waterspout'.²³ There was really little justification for these complaints. The tax on horses was possibly a real grievance, but the poll tax increase had been offset by the abolition of town-land rents, and most of the vexatious regulations which had attracted Gordon's

22 Affidavit of Robert Hanslip, 22 October 1883, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 148/1883, enc.1.

23 A copy of this petition is contained in F3/43, no.22.

attention in 1878 had already been repealed.²⁴ The real complaint of the petitioners was revealed in a paragraph towards the end of the petition:

We do not complain about those chiefs and government officials who have been long in office...but our petition is against the officials appointed at the present time, that men suitable for the time may be appointed.

The core of the complaint was opposition to Baker and this was the common factor uniting the three groups which contributed to the Mu'a movement.

The specific complaints, on the other hand, provided a valuable cloak for the petitioners' real motives, and Hanslip argued so eloquently that the movement sought redress of real grievances that Symonds described the society in his despatches as evidence of the 'increasing impatience...of the people generally...under the heavy taxation and severe laws'.²⁵ It was similarly represented in the Fiji Times, whose 'own correspondent' in Tonga was E.W. Parker. Fortunately there was an impartial observer in Tonga at the time, R.S. Swanston, the adviser of the late Ma'afu, who had come to Tonga in an unsuccessful bid to find employment under the Tongan Government. When a report appeared in

24 Baker to Gordon, 26 October 1881, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 201/1881.

25 Symonds to Gordon, 15 September 1881, F3/12/81, no.17.

the Fiji Times some time later claiming that the movement was widely supported by an exasperated and suffering populace,²⁶ Swanston scoffed at the article as 'mere froth', 'a pyramid with the apex for its base', and 'so coloured and exaggerated that the people of the country he writes from would laugh at him did they know what he had written'.²⁷

When the petition was handed to Tupou he summoned the members of the Mu'a society to attend a fono (a public meeting to hear orders) in Nuku'alofa and lectured them upon their action. He told them, 'There shall not be two Parliaments in Tonga',²⁸ and adamantly refused to dismiss Baker. He then asked them to be patient, and assured them that 'events would show his actions to be right'.²⁹ Finally he made the petitioners promise never to interfere in the affairs of the Government again, and dismissed them on this understanding.

The episode might have ended there despite the powerful interests that were mobilising behind the Mu'a group, but Baker was piqued at being

26 The Fiji Times, 10 December 1881, letter from a correspondent in Nuku'alofa dated 20 October 1881.

27 The Fiji Times, 14 December 1881, letter from R.S. Swanston, n.d.

28 Koe Boobooi, vol.III, no.2, September 1881.

29 Symonds to Gordon, 6 January 1882, F.O.58, vol.177.

criticised by Tongans and determined to reply to such affrontery. He left Tonga for New Zealand in September 1881, but before sailing he issued an edition of Koe Boobooi alluding to the Mu'a affair. He derisively referred to the society as the 'Mu'a Parliament', and described it as '...a meeting of debtors and thieves and some people just finished work for the Government [i.e. ex-convicts]'. He protested:

Forsooth! Is that the class of persons to discuss the laws? They even went and engaged the services of prisoners working in the Government for theft and told them to attend the meeting.³⁰

The Mu'a Parliament responded to Baker's accusations in a manner which suggests that they had been guaranteed support from other interested parties. Despite their promise to the King, and in defiance of the threats to use armed force against them, the petitioners met again to draft a reply to Baker's article. They answered Baker's personal strictures by referring to his promise in 1875 to build a church in Mu'a from the Jubilee Fund, a promise he had never fulfilled, and retorted: 'Your criticism is like a pot blaming a frying pan'. They warned all Tongans:

Do not pay too much attention to that 'gentleman' because it is not as if we had not seen the way he rules; we have long known his way when he was head of the church, and through him the church has got into difficulties.

30 Koe Boobooi, vol.III, no.2.

They then reiterated the complaints they had made in the original petition and concluded with a demand that Baker be removed. 'The Bible', they declared, 'testifies that the sheep will run from a strange shepherd, but will follow their rightful one'.³¹

When word of this latest meeting reached Tupou he determined to take strong measures. Police were despatched to Mu'a to bring in the representatives to stand trial on charges of high treason and breach of agreement. The trial was held in Nuku'alofa in October 1881. The magistrate could find no law that the petitioners had broken, so they were acquitted, but after pronouncing this verdict the magistrate, Maka, washed his hands and then addressed the petitioners:

I have nothing to do with what I am about to tell you. I only do it because the chiefs have ordered me. After this day you are not to meet together any more. If you do...some of your number will be hanged and the rest banished.³²

The King had made his attitude very clear. Any further action by the Mu'a Parliament would be treated as rebellion. Yet within a few weeks of being acquitted the Mu'a men were secretly planning another move. They were incited to continue their agitation by Robert Hanslip, probably

31 'Second Letter, being an Answer to the "Boobooi" that was Brought', n.d., F3/43, no.22.

32 Niu Vakai, no.1, October 1881.

acting on behalf of all the English residents. Hanslip had attended the trial, and a few days after the verdict had been handed down he published the first edition of a Tongan language manuscript newspaper, the Niu Vakai ['Look-out Coconut']. In a long article entitled 'The Mu'a Parliament' he reviewed the course of events which had led up to the trial and defended the legality of the actions of the Mu'a men. He wrote:

I must give the highest praise to you Tobui and the other members of the Mu'a Parliament for the knowledge of the laws you showed and for the patience you exhibited when insulted.

He condemned the actions of the Government, claiming that Tupou had acted illegally in calling the men to a fono, that Baker had issued malicious libels in his article in Koe Boobooi, and that Tu'uhetoka had 'trampled on the Constitution' by bringing the men to trial.³³

Hanslip evidently accompanied his public pronouncements by private communications with the Mu'a men, for on 7 November 1881, less than three weeks after the trial had ended, Leka and Tupouto'a wrote to him seeking advice about a new and bolder move. They wrote:

Please do another thing for us and tell us if you think we should put the question to all Tonga as to whether they are willing that Mr Baker should rule or not. If it is a good

³³ Ibid.

thing write and tell, and if not, never mind, we will give it up.³⁴

Hanslip evidently thought it was a 'good thing', and the members of the society began paying visits to their villages to ask all the taxpayers whether or not they supported a move to have Baker removed. Not unnaturally the villagers hastened to agree with their hereditary leaders - it would have been almost impossible for them to do otherwise - and a large number of names was collected.³⁵ When Tōpui had thus obtained two thousand names he wrote to Hanslip:

We write to inform you that we have finished our work - the list of people opposed to Mr Baker.... We are much obliged to you Mr Hanslip, and we hope you will be good enough to inform us what is proper to do.³⁶

On Hanslip's advice a petition was addressed to Queen Victoria, requesting her 'to order Mr Baker to leave Tonga, for we are not willing that he

34 Leka and Tupouto'a to Hanslip, 7 November 1881, F3/2/82, no.2, enc.1.

35 The question put to the villagers was very loaded. Leka and Tupouto'a told Hanslip: 'We wish to ask Tonga are they willing that Mr Baker should rule, and break the law of the land, and do as he likes, rendering of no account the laws and the Constitution which His Majesty King George Tupou has given', Leka and Tupouto'a to Hanslip, 7 November 1881.

36 Tōpui to Hanslip, n.d. (received by Hanslip 12 December 1881), F3/2/82, no.2, enc.4.

should hold office in our land'.³⁷ On 5 January 1882 Hanslip delivered the petition to Symonds;³⁸ it was translated from Tongan into English by Moulton and forwarded to Sir Arthur Gordon on 6 January.³⁹

The presentation of the petition to the British Queen had been done clandestinely, but reports that the Mu'a group had been canvassing support in the villages had reached the King. On 29 December 1881 Ngū sent off a report to Baker, who was still in Auckland:

The Minister of Police, Tuuhetoka, had been investigating the petition they are getting up about removing you. When the King heard about it he was terribly enraged and said without any hesitation that it is to try and dethrone me, not for the Premier's banishment, and looks like the work of a white man.⁴⁰

The King was sure that the country was in revolt and that several 'big chiefs were concerned'.⁴¹

Not trusting the local judges he left for Ha'apai on 11 January 1882 to bring back judges to try the men who had defied him. On 22 January the judges arrived in Tonga, together with a large band of Ha'apai police, and on 30 January the leaders of

37 Usaia Tōbui and 2000 Tongans to Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, 2 January 1882, F.O.58, vol.177.

38 Hanslip to Symonds, 5 January 1882, F3/2/82, no.2.

39 Symonds to Gordon, 6 January 1882, F.O.58, vol.177.

40 Baker, Memoirs, p.31.

41 Koe Taimi o Toga, vol.I, no.1, March 1882.

the Mu'a Parliament were brought to Nuku'alofa, put in irons, and lodged in prison.⁴² According to Symonds they were there subjected to:

...a course of ill-treatment and humiliation that will be lasting disgrace to a Government calling itself Christian and Constitutional. Indignities of a description most repugnant to a native mind were heaped upon the prisoners.⁴³

On 11 February 1882 Tupou arrived back in Tonga with four vessels filled with fighting men from Vava'u and on the two succeeding days a number of vessels arrived from Ha'apai,⁴⁴ whose crews performed a laka-laka [war-dance] on arrival to a chant composed for the occasion:

This country has become depraved
It needs a club or two.
This country has become wrong headed.
An axe or two will fix that!⁴⁵

Under conditions that amounted to martial law an investigation was held to decide whether a prima facie case could be made against the petitioners. Even the Ha'apai judges, however, could discover no law that the petitioners had broken, and told the King so. But Tupou had lost patience with legal niceties. Declaring that 'if the law would not

42 Symonds to Gordon, 20 March 1882, F3/12/82, no.3.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Niu Vakai, no.5, February 1882.

hang the men, they should be hung without it',⁴⁶
 he ordered them to be removed to Ha'apai and
 summarily executed.⁴⁷

Rumours of the King's declared intention
 spread rapidly. The Europeans reacted by petitioning
 Symonds to demand a fair trial for the men in
 Tonga,⁴⁸ and at the same time rumours reached
 Symonds that an armed attempt would be made to
 rescue the prisoners. Symonds protested to the
 King. Tupou admitted that he had said he would
 hang the men and the Consul remarked: 'that the
 King intended to carry out his threat, there is
 no doubt'. However when Symonds 'placed before
 him the consequences of such a step', the King
 agreed to bring the petitioners back to Tonga at
 a later date and allow them to stand trial.⁴⁹
 Tupou then left for Ha'apai, where he was not only
 King but hereditary chief, and where the loyalty
 of his people was beyond question.

Meanwhile the petition had reached Gordon
 in Wellington on 15 January, and as further evidence
 of the complicity of the Europeans in the affair,
 it was accompanied by Von Hagen who, Gordon

46 The Fiji Times, 31 May 1882, letter from 'Our
 Own Correspondent'.

47 Symonds to Gordon, 20 March 1882, F3/12/82, no.3.

48 European Residents in Tonga to Symonds, 7
 March 1882, F.O.58, vol.177.

49 Symonds to Gordon, 20 March 1882, F3/12/82,
 no.3.

commented, 'represented himself as a species of delegate to urge the prayers of the petition and entrusted with its delivery'.⁵⁰ Von Hagen also released the details to the New Zealand press and Gordon therefore felt obliged to supply a copy of the supposedly secret document to Baker, who had been in Auckland since the previous September. Baker knew little of what had been happening in Tonga and could offer no explanation for the petition. He pointed out that he had recently repealed most of the laws that had been considered vexatious.⁵¹ The only new law which infringed Tongan freedom was the Cricket Law, which forbade the game except on Thursdays and Saturdays and had been introduced because cricket had become so popular that the copra rotted in the plantations and taxes remained unpaid, while the whole population indulged in an endless series of test matches.⁵² Baker admitted that this law had caused 'many young men to grumble', but protested 'there was nothing in such regulations really to cause any such objection or annoyance as is intimated'. He suspected that there were deeper influences at work, and confided

50 Gordon to Symonds, 23 February 1882, F3/10/82, no.3.

51 Baker to Gordon, 15 February 1882, F3/10/82, no.3, enc.

52 Symonds to Gordon, 25 July 1881, F3/12/81, no.15; Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, p.150.

to Gordon:

As my information from Tonga is so meagre on the subject, I cannot write anything definitely as to the parties signing the petition, but that I have reason to believe that the natives so doing were instigated to do so by certain whites with whom I have been compelled to come into collision.⁵³

Baker returned to Tonga early in April 1882⁵⁴ and found that what had been a minor disturbance when he left in the previous September had grown during his absence into a major crisis, with a large section of the Tongan population, the Wesleyan Church, the English community and the British Consul confronting the Government with open hostility.

When the Mu'a Parliament had begun agitating against Baker the majority of Tongans paid little attention. The Mu'a group represented the interests of the minor title holders; members of other classes, comprising the vast majority of Tongans, had every reason to support the redistribution of the lands which Baker's laws envisaged. However between September 1881 and April 1882 the issues had grown vastly more complicated. In the first place the petitioners were people of Mu'a, the traditional focus of

53 Baker to Gordon, 15 February 1882, F3/10/82, no.3, enc.

54 The Fiji Times, 3 June 1882, letter from 'Our Own Correspondent', dated 8 April 1882.

opposition to the central Government, and when the King moved against them he had aroused all the latent hostilities which the people of Hahake felt towards Nuku'alofa. Secondly, Tungī's involvement in the movement had revived the traditional rivalry between Tungī's lineage, the Ha'a Takalau'a, and the lineage of the King, the Ha'a Tu'i Kamokupolu. It seems also that other lineages had lined up with one side or the other, with the powerful Ha'a Havea supporting Tungī.⁵⁵ Thirdly, the introduction of Ha'apai and Vava'u warriors had injected into the situation the suspicion and hostility that had always existed between Tongatapu and the other islands. Tungī, it must be remembered, was a paramount chief of Tongatapu, while Tupou's hereditary fief was Ha'apai and Vava'u. The situation had been further aggravated by the visits of the petitioners to the villages, and by the provocative statements in Niu Vakai, which appeared regularly, trumpeting praises of the Mu'a men and condemnation of the Government. The appearance in March 1882 of a new newspaper, Koe Taimi o Tonga [Tonga Times], edited by Ngū and supporting the Government, had only added fuel to the controversy

55 Koe Taimi o Toga, vol.I, no.1, March 1882, reports the deputation of the Ha'a Havea chiefs to humble themselves before the King. After the ceremony 'His Majesty spoke to them and told them how wrong it [the Mu'a Parliament] was and moreover that the Ha'a Havea chiefs were concerned in it'.

and supplied Hanslip with material to criticise. In March 1882 Symonds had reported that, but for his intervention and the promise which he had extracted from Tupou, an attempt would have been made to free the petitioners. The disturbance had thus assumed so threatening an aspect that armed insurrection and civil war seemed imminent.

The whites, or at least the British faction among the Europeans, were also deeply involved in the dispute. Until February 1882 only Hanslip and Von Hagen had overtly acted on the petitioners' behalf, but they were almost certainly fully supported by the other British subjects, all of whom would have welcomed any move to dislodge Baker. By March all the British residents had openly declared for the Mu'a group by their petition to restrain Tupou from summarily executing the prisoners.

The Wesleyan Church had also become involved in the controversy. Moulton had probably played no part in the original petition of the Mu'a group, but since it had been presented he had given it his support. Soon after Baker left for New Zealand Moulton published strictures on the Premier's treatment of Tēvita Tonga and Tēvita Valu, the two leading members of the Mu'a Parliament, whose land had been resumed by Baker as a site for the new College. In his magazine, the Local Preachers' Paper, Moulton wrote:

Who is it that imposes burdens nowadays? Who put up the pounds and increased taxes and the educational tax and such things? Whilst he was here we awoke of a morning in disquietude - as to whose land had been taken away, what town would be pillaged, what goods will be forbidden and what new law would be put up.⁵⁶

This statement implied support for the Mu'a faction and showed where Moulton's sympathies lay, but it was not until March 1882 that he was forced to take an unequivocal stand on the issue. The occasion was the arrival of the Ha'apai and Vava'u men in Nuku'alofa. Moulton went to the King to remonstrate and it was apparently during this exchange that Tupou learned that Moulton had translated the petition. The King was furious, and Tu'uketoka, who was present, roundly condemned Moulton as a traitor.⁵⁷ Tupou sailed to Ha'apai vowing he would not live in Nuku'alofa as long as Moulton was there, and Moulton was thrown squarely into the opposition camp. He began co-operating with Hanslip and openly supporting the cause of the petitioners.

The odd coalition of Tongan malcontents, British settlers and the Wesleyan Church was further

56 T.G.B.B. Containing a List of Charges Brought by the Premier of Tonga...Against the Rev. J.E. Moulton, p.1.

57 Affidavit of Moulton, 22 October 1883, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 148/1883, enc.3; T.G.B.B. Containing a List of Charges Brought by the Premier of Tonga...Against the Rev. J.E. Moulton, p.5.

strengthened by the support of H.F. Symonds, the British Consul. Symonds had participated in Maudslay's attempt to overthrow Baker in 1879 and his attitude towards Baker had been formed under those circumstances. He was on friendly terms with the British residents, particularly E.W. Parker and Hanslip, and had also become identified with the cause of the Wesleyan Church by marrying Moulton's daughter. Symonds identified himself so closely with the cause of the Mu'a Parliament that when Tupou removed the prisoners to Ha'apai, Symonds asked Gordon to send a warship to Tonga to ensure a fair trial for the petitioners.⁵⁸ In fact his attitude was so partisan that the German Consul-General, Zembsch, accused him of sponsoring the petition himself to provide an excuse for British annexation,⁵⁹ and even his own superior, Sir Arthur Gordon, felt moved to warn the Secretary of State for the Colonies not to give his despatches much credence.⁶⁰

Baker inherited this extremely difficult situation when he returned to Tonga in April 1882, and the full responsibility for calming down the excited passions which the events of the previous

58 Symonds to Gordon, 20 March 1882, F3/12/82, no.3.

59 Symonds to Gordon, 19 June 1882, F3/12/82, no.8; Zembsch to Symonds, 21 June 1882, F3/2/82, no.28.

60 Gordon to Derby, 3 November 1883, F.O.58, vol. 185.

six months had aroused devolved on him. He had considerable success in dealing with the unrest among the Tongans. His first step was to withdraw from circulation Koe Taimi o Toga, which he realised was only adding heat to the controversy.⁶¹ Then he issued a promise that the petitioners would be given a fair trial before the Tongan Supreme Court,⁶² a conciliatory gesture that probably did much to reduce the political temperature. On the other hand he suppressed agitators with firmness, and Vaea, a chief who had been very critical of the Government, was arraigned on a charge of sedition. Vaea was acquitted, but the case no doubt dissuaded other malcontents from acting rashly.⁶³ By July 1882, when Gordon visited Tonga, the crisis was over, although a great deal of discontent remained. Gordon noted:

...that there is very strong feeling against Mr Baker on the part of a large section of the population is certain, but I do not think it ⁶⁴is quite so general as Mr Symonds supposes.

By September Baker felt that it was safe

61 The final edition of Koe Taimi o Toga was published in April 1882.

62 Tubou Malohi [Ngū] to Symonds, 8 May 1882, F3/2/82, no.12.

63 The Fiji Times, 6 December 1882, letter from 'a correspondent', dated 15 October 1882.

64 Gordon to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 15 July 1882, F.O.58, vol.177.

to convene Parliament. The King came down from Vava'u for the occasion and took the opportunity in his opening address to warn the representatives against 'holding wrong views as regards the word "liberty"'.⁶⁵ Tungī, probably with heavy irony, moved the address in reply which stated: 'We thank Your Majesty for your explanation to the people as to the nature of their liberty',⁶⁶ but, despite Tupou's warning, the members were very obstructive. Symonds reported:

The Premier has received great opposition at every step and has experienced the greatest difficulty in getting his measures passed.... This is a new feature in the political history of Tonga, for as Your Excellency is aware Mr Baker has hitherto only had to bring forward the Bills to have them passed.⁶⁷

In fact Parliament proved so unco-operative that Baker finally walked out and tendered his resignation to Tupou. The King then summoned the members to a private interview. What was said is not recorded, but when the members reconvened Baker resumed his office and business proceeded very much more smoothly.⁶⁸

65 'His Majesty's Speech at the Opening of the Legislative Assembly', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.12, October 1882, p.3.

66 'Legislative Assembly to His Majesty King George', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.12, p.5.

67 Symonds to Gordon, 13 October 1882, F3/12/82, no.13.

68 The Fiji Times, 6 December 1882, letter from 'a correspondent', dated 15 October 1882.

It was not until February 1883, however, that Baker felt secure enough to hold the trials of the Mu'a men, which presented many problems. On the one hand, Tupou insisted that the 'rebels' should hang; on the other, Gordon had warned Baker that he would be held personally responsible if the men were punished for petitioning Queen Victoria,⁶⁹ and had instructed Symonds to sever relations with Tonga if the men were hanged.⁷⁰ Baker persuaded the King to accept a compromise that would not offend the High Commissioner, and which would discourage dissidents without causing further unrest in Tonga. The petition to Victoria had included a statement that Tupou was 'advanced in years and under Mr Baker's influence', and on the basis of this statement the men were tried and convicted on a charge of 'libelling His Majesty'. To avoid being personally concerned Baker left for New Zealand before the trials began (though he left very explicit instructions for Fehoko, the judge who was to try the case⁷¹) and, to preserve the fragile peace that had been established in Tongatapu, the trials were held in Ha'apai. Twelve of the men were sentenced to five years, and two to

69 Gordon to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 15 July 1882, F.O.58, vol.177.

70 Gordon to Symonds, 4 July 1882, F3/10/82, no.6.

71 Baker to Iseleli Fehoko, 1 January 1883, F.O.58, vol.182.

three years 'work for the Government'.⁷² By Tongan standards these sentences were relatively mild, and had it not been for the activities of the Europeans Tongan interest in the Mu'a Parliament would probably have completely expired.

In dealing with the Europeans Baker had not been successful, and the British settlers were making every effort to embarrass and, if possible, to remove him. In May 1882 they petitioned Gordon seeking Baker's deportation,⁷³ but the High Commissioner refused to comply with their wishes. He explained his reasons to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:

Mr Baker's government is that of a narrow-minded, selfish and ignorant man, unfettered by any check whatever. It is therefore a bad government. But even a bad government is better than none, and it appears to me that were Mr Baker dispossessed of power at the present moment, the government must fall into the hands of some lower or more unscrupulous foreign adventurer, or that anarchy must at once ensue.⁷⁴

Failing in this move the whites turned their attention to the press, and a regular series of articles, written by Parker and Hanslip but modestly ascribed to 'our own correspondent' or 'a correspondent',

72 Symonds to Des Voeux, 25 April 1883, F3/12/83, no.7.

73 E.W. Parker to Symonds, 21 May 1882, F3/2/82, no.27.

74 Gordon to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 15 July 1882, F.O.58, vol.177.

began appearing in the Fiji Times, directing praise on the Mu'a Parliament and scathing criticism on Baker and the Tongan Government. In Tonga the issues were kept alive by Niu Vakai, which continued to appear regularly in 1882.

Baker could do little about the Fiji Times, but he did begin writing articles himself for the New Zealand press.⁷⁵ He also made strenuous efforts to suppress Niu Vakai. Affidavits from Tu'uhetoka and Ngū were obtained concerning Hanslip's part in the Mu'a Parliament and, when Gordon visited Tonga in July 1882, Baker offered these as evidence in support of a formal request that the High Commissioner deport Hanslip as one 'dangerous to the peace and good order of the Western Pacific'. Gordon examined the case and expressed 'strong disapprobation' of Hanslip's 'injudicious interference in native affairs', but he found nothing properly illegal in Hanslip's activities and refused to deport him.⁷⁶ Baker tried again in September 1882 by putting an Act Relative to Newspapers and an Act Relative to Sedition through Parliament, the one making an editor liable for the contents of his

75 The Fiji Times, 5 May 1883, letter from 'Our Own Correspondent', n.d., refers to Baker as the author of a series of articles in the Auckland Weekly Times.

76 Memorandum by Gordon, 5 July 1882, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 148/1883, enc. 1C.

newspaper, and the other making it an act of sedition, punishable by up to 24 years imprisonment, for anyone, 'by speaking, writing, or printing', to 'libel or curse His Majesty, the King of Tonga', 'to attempt to influence any person or persons to rebel against the laws of the Kingdom' or to 'do anything to produce hatred or contempt to the Government of His Majesty'.⁷⁷ This second attempt to silence Niu Vakai was also frustrated by the High Commissioner. In the interim Gordon had retired to England and the office had been filled by Sir William Des Voeux, who was relatively new to Fiji and knew little of the circumstances of the case. Symonds described Niu Vakai to him as a paper:

...edited by an Englishman and supported by the British residents who...naturally look upon the press as the most legitimate means of expressing their views,⁷⁸

thus leading Des Voeux to believe that it was an English language paper circulating among the English community, rather than a Tongan language paper written by a provocateur whose only aim was to stir up unrest among the Tongans. On the basis of Symonds' information Des Voeux instructed that Tupou should be asked to repeal the laws, or at

77 'An Act Relative to Sedition', and 'An Act to Regulate the Printing of Newspapers', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.14, November 1882.

78 Symonds to Des Voeux, 7 December 1882, F3/12/82, no.14.

least not to use them 'for the suppression of legitimate criticism upon the acts of His Majesty's adviser'.⁷⁹ The law was not repealed, but Baker dared not invoke it against Hanslip and the Niu Vakai continued to appear.

Soon after this exchange Baker held the trials of the petitioners and, while this event virtually marked the end of the Tongan disaffection, it served only to reinvigorate the Europeans. In the first place, Tupou had promised Symonds that the trials would be held in Tongatapu, and the Consul regarded the decision to hold them in Ha'apai as a personal affront and as a direct blow at British prestige.⁸⁰ Secondly, Baker had sent Fehoko, the judge who conducted the trials, very detailed instructions as to the procedure to be observed and even the punishment to be inflicted.⁸¹ Symonds was somehow able to obtain a copy of this letter, and with this written evidence that the case had been prejudged he put a strong plea for British intervention to Des Voeux.⁸² Accordingly Commodore James Erskine visited Tonga on H.M.S. Miranda in June 1883 to investigate the matter.

79 Des Voeux to Symonds, 16 February 1883, F3/18/83, no.5.

80 Symonds to Des Voeux, 25 April 1883, F3/12/83, no.7.

81 Baker to Iseleli Fehoko, 1 January 1883, F.O.58, vol.182.

82 Symonds to Des Voeux, 25 April 1883, F3/12/83, no.7.

At the time of Erskine's visit Baker was absent in New Zealand and the King was in Vava'u. A gale prevented the Miranda from sailing to Vava'u and so Erskine's only source of information was Symonds, whose account of the situation the Commodore accepted without question. Erskine had no authority to intervene, but on Symonds' urging he interviewed Ngū and issued an ultimatum that unless the prisoners were released Britain would break off relations with Tonga.⁸³ This was probably all that Erskine threatened, but a rumour circulated that he had also warned Ngū that he would return and bombard Nuku'alofa if his demands were not met,⁸⁴ and this rumour encouraged the whites to redouble their efforts.

When Baker returned to Tonga in August 1883 the behaviour of the Europeans was so threatening that he took extraordinary precautions to secure his own safety. Symonds reported:

He invariably stayed at night on board his vessel although he has a large furnished house here, and I am informed upon good authority that before his departure for the North a portion of the Tongan soldiery was disarmed and the rifles taken aboard the Sandfly... [one night] he placed a woman in irons for having

83 The Fiji Times, 12 January 1884, letter from 'a correspondent', dated 6 November 1883; Commodore Erskine to the Secretary to the Admiralty, 29 June 1883, F.O.C.P. 5340, no.46, enc.1.

84 T.G.B.B. Containing a List of Charges Brought by the Premier...Against the Rev. J.E. Moulton, pp.17, 18.

struck a light on board the vessel. This would point to the conclusion that a quantity of powder was on board.⁸⁵

There were other signs that the whites were making a concerted effort to bring matters to a conclusion. In October 1883 Hanslip, Parker and Moulton made yet a further petition to Des Voeux seeking Baker's deportation and supported it by lengthy affidavits testifying to Baker's pernicious influence in Tonga.⁸⁶ In November Dr Buckland, the Tongan Government Medical Officer, signed a medical certificate asserting that Tupou was suffering from 'incipient softening of the brain'⁸⁷ and this information was widely circulated among the Europeans, even finding its way into the Fiji Times.⁸⁸ Early in December Symonds and a group of Europeans took matters into their own hands when a piece of land belonging to the King, but over which Frederick Coventry claimed a title, was leased to

85 Symonds to Des Voeux, 6 November 1883, F3/12/83, no.12.

86 Affidavit of Robert Hanslip, 22 October 1883; affidavit of E.W. Parker, 22 October 1883; affidavit of J.E. Moulton, 22 October 1883: W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 148/1883, encs.1, 2 and 3 respectively.

87 Statement of Dr A.G. Buckland, 13 November 1883, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 10.

88 The Fiji Times, 23 April 1884.

a Tongan and planted with yams.⁸⁹ According to Fifita, the lessee, their behaviour was most arrogant. He swore:

We had cleared our land and...planted our yam patch.... Whilst we were engaged in our work the Consul, Mr Symonds, came with Mr Percival Mr Coventry and some others. When he came up to the ground he demanded to know at whose command we had planted on their ground and ran at once and trampled under foot one row of yams and then...another row. We went to him and said, 'Mr Symonds, why are you thus destroying our garden...for it is the land of the King on which we are residing?' Mr Symonds replied, 'If there is anyone here wishes to fight let him come and we will fight.... This is a portion of Britain which we possess'.⁹⁰

The sequel to this incident occurred in March 1884, when Coventry's store in Nuku'alofa caught fire. Wellington Ngū, who was a bystander, ordered his people not to assist the Europeans to put out the blaze, and the Tongans stood by cheering while the building was razed.⁹¹

89 Symonds to Thurston, 13 December 1883, copies of Despatches from the Deputy Commissioner, or Agent, Tonga, to the High Commissioner, 1879-1953, file for 1883, item no.16 [cited henceforth as F3/9/83, no.16, and similarly for other files and items in the series].

90 Affidavit of S. Fifita, 4 August 1884, T.G.B.B. Correspondence between the Tonga Government and the British Government in re the Action of H.F. Symonds...., p.7.

91 Affidavit of Frederick Langdale, 20 March 1884; affidavit of Henry Easter, 20 March 1884; affidavit of E.W. Parker, 28 March 1884: F.O.C.P. 5310, no.129, encs.22, 23 and 24 respectively.

Meanwhile there had been other signs of the extremely provocative attitude which the whites were assuming. In December 1883 seven British residents gave formal notification to Symonds that they were determined to pay no further taxes to the Tongan Government 'until the existing state of affairs is altered'.⁹² A campaign of abuse was also launched against Baker, best exemplified by a long doggerel poem of some 23 stanzas on the subject of Baker's iniquities. Two sample stanzas are sufficient to show the general theme:

V.

Professing to preach of the word of our Saviour,
Teaching to tread on the path that he trod;
He showed by the fruits of his filthy behaviour,
How hypocrites deal with the Gospel of God.

XXI.

A thing with a license to cheat and to plunder,
To lie, to deceive, to bamboozle, to rob,
The cloak of the Gospel to hide his deeds under,
And lastly a humbug, a cad, and a snob.⁹³

Baker was also subjected to personal indignity. On one occasion when he and his wife met Hanslip in Nuku'alofa, the latter turned his back, lifted his coat tails, and presented his behind to the Premier, an insult by any standards, but according to Tongan usage the very worst that could be offered.⁹⁴

92 F. Coventry and six other Europeans to Symonds, 31 December 1883, F3/2/83, no.41.

93 Tongan Hymn, F.O.C.P. 5310, no.129, enc.19.

94 T.G.B.B. Containing a List of Charges Brought by the Premier of Tonga...Against the Rev. J.E. Moulton, p.7.

Baker's efforts to deal with the growing opposition from Moulton and the Wesleyan Church were equally unsuccessful. Moulton had begun giving overt support to the petitioners in March 1882 and, when the British residents petitioned for Baker's removal in the following May, he had assured E.W. Parker that, though he was unwilling to sign the petition, he agreed with its contents and was prepared to give oral testimony in support of it to the High Commissioner.⁹⁵ About the same time he sent one of his Tongan ministers, Tēvita Fīnau, to remonstrate with Baker over the case of three Tupou College students who had been convicted on a charge of stealing. Fīnau's protests were apparently couched in insulting language, for Baker thrashed him with a riding whip.⁹⁶ The next Sunday Moulton denounced Baker from the pulpit, comparing his act to Saul's attack on David, and declaring:

Was such a thing ever heard of, here or elsewhere? For Mr Baker was a good man, a minister, had a position. We all of us...acknowledge that he was useful to you; but how do we see him now? Isn't his goodness gone? ...he has fallen into evil. He has not retained his goodness; he has an evil spirit.⁹⁷

95 E.W. Parker to Symonds, 31 May 1882, F3/2/82, no.27.

96 Affidavit of J.E. Moulton, 22 October 1883, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 148/1883, enc.3.

97 T.G.B.B. Containing a List of Charges Brought by the Premier of Tonga...Against the Rev. J.E. Moulton, p.9.

Then in July 1882, when Gordon delivered judgement on the application to deport Hanslip, Moulton printed Gordon's verdict on the mission press, and circulated it as a pamphlet.⁹⁸ A little later he assisted Hanslip to convert Niu Vakai from manuscript to print by lending mission type.⁹⁹

When Baker began putting pressure on Moulton by tightening the school regulations and thus preventing new students from entering Tupou College, Moulton responded by writing, printing and circulating an open letter to the King complaining about the favouritism shown to the Government College.¹⁰⁰

Following the visit of H.M.S. Miranda Moulton again went into print against Baker, publishing in the Tupou College Magazine an article denouncing the Tongan Government's attitude towards Britain and advising Tonga 'to be quick and bring the pocket handkerchief to the Consul' and to 'chose a Premier which they see is a man pleasing to the great kingdom'.¹⁰¹ Finally, in October 1883, Moulton joined in a petition to the High Commissioner seeking the removal of Baker from Tonga as one

98 Ibid., pp.5, 6, 7.

99 Ibid.

100 Moulton to H.M. the King of Tonga and the Parliament, 25 September 1882, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 148/1883, enc.3D.

101 T.G.B.B. Containing a List of Charges Brought by the Premier of Tonga...Against the Rev. J.E. Moulton, p.17.

'prejudicial to peace and good order'.¹⁰²

Baker acted decisively against Moulton when the Tongan District Meeting convened at Ha'apai on 24 October 1883. Through Watkin he brought a long series of charges against Moulton, alleging that he was disaffected towards the Government and encouraged unrest and sedition. Watkin took over the chair for the hearing of the charges, and the meeting, voting separately on each of the twenty-one charges, gave a majority of votes against Moulton on each charge. The decision was then sent to the Conference for ratification.¹⁰³ At the same time the King addressed the Conference outlining his objections to Moulton and seeking his recall.

Tupou wrote:

Is there anyone who will expect that the land will be at peace or the Church in a good state by such language or such work [as Moulton's]? And therefore I earnestly beg and the Privy Council earnestly begs for you to have love to me and Tonga and RECALL Mr Moulton; for I do not wish to see him, or wish to hear him preach: he is no longer of any service to Tonga.¹⁰⁴

102 Affidavit of J.E. Moulton, 22 October 1883, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 148/1883, and enc.3.

103 T.G.B.B. Containing a List of Charges Brought by the Premier of Tonga...Against the Rev. J.E. Moulton.

104 Ibid., p.2, letter from Tupou to the President and Elders of the Conference in Sydney, dated 30 October 1883.

The New South Wales and Queensland Conference met in January 1884 and appointed a special committee to consider the controversy in Tonga. Baker appeared before this committee and stressed that, while it was common knowledge that he and Moulton were enemies of long standing, he had not brought the charges for personal reasons, and that the only question at issue was 'Mr Moulton's political and obnoxious conduct to the King and his Government'.¹⁰⁵ But Baker was pleading a lost cause; by his Schools Act he had completely alienated Wesleyan opinion in Australia, and in spite of Tupou's plea and the recommendations of the Tongan District Meeting the committee rejected every charge and expressed its 'deliberate and earnest conviction that, at this juncture, the well being of our Church in Tonga requires the presence there of the Rev. J.E. Moulton'. A public censure was given to Watkin for his handling of the affair.¹⁰⁶

Baker left Sydney for Tonga, denouncing the decision of the committee as 'unfair, discourteous

105 T.G.B.B. Containing Documents Read before and Presented by the Premier of Tonga...to the Conference Committee on Tongan Affairs, p.1.

106 Report of the Committee Appointed by the Wesleyan Conference to Consider Tongan Affairs [January 1884].

and unjust',¹⁰⁷ and when Watkin received word of the censure that had been made upon his conduct he wrote to another missionary warning: 'I don't intend to submit quietly to the way in which I have been treated'.¹⁰⁸ Moulton, on the other hand, returned to Tonga in triumph, although this was somewhat diminished when he called at Vava'u to acquaint Tupou of the Conference decision. The King refused to see him.¹⁰⁹

By mid-1884 it was becoming plain that Baker was unable to control the opposition of the beach and the Church. At the same time outside influences were pressing matters to a climax.

Symonds had been constantly urging Des Voeux to take direct action against Baker and in August 1883 the High Commissioner decided to follow his advice. He informed the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that he had determined to send a warship to Tonga to free the prisoners and deport Baker.¹¹⁰ This despatch was referred to Gordon

107 Baker to Rev. G. Lane, 22 February 1884, T.G. B.B. Containing Documents Read before and Presented by the Premier of Tonga...to the Conference Committee on Tongan Affairs, p.3.

108 Watkin to [Oldmeadow?], 18 April 1884, M.O.M.C. Uncat.MSS, set 207.

109 Symonds to Thurston, 28 March 1884, F3/12/84, no.5.

110 Des Voeux to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1 August 1883, F.O.58, vol.182.

for comment. Gordon advised that any change in the Government in Tonga could only be a change for the worse, and urged that Des Voeux be restrained from rash action.¹¹¹ Derby concurred, and Des Voeux was instructed not to proceed with his plan.¹¹² However Des Voeux was determined to make some show of force in Tonga, and in July 1884 Captain Sir Cyprian Bridge, commanding H.M.S. Espiègle, was ordered to proceed to Tonga to demand the release of the Mu'a men and to seek satisfaction on several matters of dispute between Tonga and Britain.¹¹³ But when Bridge reached Nuku'alofa he found that he had been forestalled. Baker, apparently realising that his position was no longer tenable, had sailed for New Zealand, and before leaving had issued, as a mark of his 'great love felt...for all the natives of Tonga', a full and free pardon to the Mu'a petitioners.¹¹⁴

111 Gordon to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies; 3 November 1883, F.O.58, vol.185.

112 Derby to Des Voeux, 19 November 1883, F.O.58, vol.185.

113 'Sailing Orders--"Espiègle"', 12 May 1884, H.M.S. Espiègle Visit to Samoa and Tonga, no.1, copy in W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 1884.

114 Symonds to Thurston, 21 June 1884, F.O.58, vol.188.

CHAPTER 10

SECESSION AND PERSECUTION

DURING the episode of the Mu'a Parliament Baker had behaved, on the whole, in a moderate and conciliatory manner, and had tried to compose the troubles by lawful process and judicious compromise. By late 1884, however, it was clear that this policy was bankrupt, that the opposition parties had outstripped him and that his eclipse was imminent. There were in fact only two alternatives left: to submit meekly, or to risk everything in a desperate bid to regain the initiative. For the Ta'emangoi the former was unthinkable and he began preparing for the latter. The traders and the Tongan dissidents were the most active elements in the anti-Baker coalition, but the strength of the movement lay in the support of Symonds and Moulton and the interests which they represented. Characteristically, Baker directed his attack against the real core of the opposition: he challenged simultaneously the British Government and the Wesleyan Church.

The visit of H.M.S. Espiègle provided the excuse for Baker to move against Symonds. Captain Bridge had visited Tupou at Vava'u in the company of Symonds, and had demanded of the King the repeal of the press law, the treason and sedition laws and the law prohibiting Tongans from bringing cases

before the High Commissioner's Court. He had also demanded an apology for alleged discourtesy shown by the Tongan Government to Symonds, and an undertaking that, in future, 'that courtesy which is invariably observed by civilised countries when conducting negotiations with other states should be accorded to Her Majesty's representative in Tonga'.¹ Tupou had protested that the constitution did not permit him to repeal laws that had been passed by Parliament,² but Bridge, backed by the authority of Espiègle's guns, had insisted, and the King had been obliged, under protest, to give the required undertakings.

Baker prepared a long formal protest about the actions of Bridge and Symonds, forwarding copies to the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the High Commissioner and at the same time publishing the text as a Tongan Government Blue Book. He pointed to many inaccuracies in Bridge's statements which had their root in misleading despatches sent by Symonds. For instance Bridge had objected to the

-
- 1 'Minutes of the Proceedings of a Conference held at the Palace, Vavau, Tonga on July 17th 1884', H.M.S. Espiègle - Visit to Samoa and Tonga - May to August 1884 - Captain Bridge, R.N., p.12, copy in W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 1884.
 - 2 H.M. King George of Tonga to Captain Bridge, 25 July 1884, H.M.S. Espiègle - Visit to Samoa and Tonga..., p.14.

press law because in its English translation there was no mention of a trial to assess the guilt of a defendant. Baker pointed out that in the Tongan original, which was the version used in the courts, this ambiguity did not occur. Bridge had demanded the repeal of the Law Relative to Treason on the grounds that it contravened the British Treaty, but Baker showed that this law had been passed in 1875, long before the signing of the treaty, and that in any case the law specifically exempted foreigners from its application. On the question of Tongans bringing cases before the High Commissioner's Court, Baker had sought legal opinion from two eminent colonial jurists, Sir Wigram Allen and Sir Frederick Whitaker, to support his case.

Whitaker had advised:

I see no ground under the Treaty on which the British Government can reasonably make a complaint, or why any demand for the repeal of the law should be made.

Baker countered the charge of discourtesy to Symonds by accusing him of gross breaches of courtesy towards the Tongan Government, instancing his procuring and publicising a statement that Tupou was in his dotage and suffering from 'softening of the brain'. Baker protested:

The Tonga Government need not ask Your Lordship what greater act of discourtesy the Representative of one Sovereign could have been guilty of towards another Sovereign,

and concluded:

Your Lordship must certainly allow that the conduct of the British Vice Consul, backed by the recent action of H.M.S. Espiègle...has not been so friendly as it might have been and that there must be a mistake somewhere in the information that has been tendered to Her Majesty's Government.³

Baker's complaint was effective. His evidence showed British policy to have been founded on false premises and erroneous information, and Des Voeux was furious at being caught so badly off-balance. He wrote to Lord Derby explaining that he had merely inherited the situation, and that the real blame belonged to Gordon, who had encouraged Symonds to pursue a policy of 'continual meddling with native affairs'.⁴ Symonds was on leave in England at the time of the complaint, so the correspondence between Des Voeux and him has not survived. It may be assumed, however, that if Des Voeux wrote to Symonds, his letter was not very polite. When Symonds returned to Tonga in 1885 Des Voeux had moved on to another appointment, but his temporary successor, William McGregor, gave Symonds some very pointed advice, and strictly enjoined him 'studiously [to] refrain from taking

3 Baker to H.B.M.'s Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, 27 August 1884, T.G.B.B., Correspondence Between the Tonga Government and the British Government in re the Action of H.F. Symonds esq. ..., pp.1-9.

4 Des Voeux to Derby, 3 December 1884, F.O.C.P. 5150, no.23, enc.1.

any part, direct or indirect in the domestic political squabbles of Tonga'.⁵ Symonds' teeth were drawn, and though he remained in Tonga during 1885 and 1886, he was merely a bystander during the events of those years. In June 1886 he sought a transfer from Tonga,⁶ and in the following October he was appointed to Samoa.⁷

Baker's protest had an equally chastening effect on the High Commissioner. No formal apology was offered for the Espiègle affair, but when J.B. Thurston, the then Acting High Commissioner, visited Tonga in September 1885, he came with ostentatious humility, not on a man-of-war but on an island cargo steamer.⁸ For the time being at least Baker had the advantage, and British interference in Tongan affairs was suspended.

With Symonds disabled, Baker turned his attention to the Wesleyan Church and in January 1885 provoked a wholesale secession of the Tongan Methodists from the Sydney Conference; it was a deliberate and decisive blow which completely

5 Acting Consul-General McGregor to Vice-Consul Symonds, 10 June 1885, F.O.C.P. 5159, no.44.

6 Symonds to Thurston, 29 June 1886, F3/12/86, no.34.

7 Thurston to Symonds, 29 October 1886, F3/10/86, no.34.

8 Thurston to Salisbury, 30 September 1885, F.O.C.P. 5199, no.117.

disrupted and almost destroyed the Wesleyan Church in Tonga. He gave adequate warning of his intentions: in August 1884 Ngū wrote on behalf of the King to the President of the General Conference telling him that Tupou was 'grieved and annoyed' that the New South Wales and Queensland Conference had not acceded to his request for Moulton's removal. Ngū asked that the General Conference exercise its authority to remove Moulton, and warned:

...if not His Majesty would respectfully suggest for the Wesleyan Church to retire from Tonga altogether, and so prevent that secession which must take place should the General Conference not interfere in the matter.⁹

At the end of September Baker formally applied to the General Conference seeking the removal of Moulton, whom he claimed had 'become a political partisan and opponent of his Government, and by his conduct personally obnoxious to His Majesty'. He added 'I am authorised by His Majesty to say that if the General Conference will grant the same, no schism will take place'.¹⁰ That a schism would occur if Moulton were not removed was not stated, but it was clearly implied.

The Australasian General Conference met

9 Ngū to the President of the Australasian General Conference, 1 August 1884, T.G.B.B. in re Tonga Wesleyan Mission Affairs.

10 Baker to the President of the Australasian General Conference, 30 September 1884, T.G.B.B. in re Tonga Wesleyan Mission Affairs.

in Christchurch, New Zealand, in November 1884 and Moulton attended to defend his position.¹¹ It was decided that a deputation should visit Tonga to enquire into its problems, but no action was taken against Moulton, and he returned to Tonga with his status and authority unimpaired.¹² Baker noted in his journal: 'It is a matter of regret that the General Conference held in Christchurch did not accept the compromise proposed by the King',¹³ but one doubts that the regret was very keenly felt. By careful manoeuvre he had placed himself, according to his own lights, 'in the right'. It only wanted a favourable opportunity and he could, with a clear conscience, carry out the threatened secession.

The opportunity came in January 1885. Baker received word that both Tupou and Watkin were ill in Vava'u, and he sailed there to attend to them. On his return he called at Lifuka, Ha'apai, where he found the Wesleyan congregation torn with dissension over a local dispute. The resident minister had been Paula Vī (son of the first ordained Tongan minister, Pita Vī, who had converted Tupou fifty years earlier), but for being too outspoken in his support for Tupou in the dispute between the

11 The Fiji Times, 21 March 1885, letter from 'Our Own Correspondent', n.d.

12 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.14.

13 Baker, Memoirs, p.23.

King and Moulton he had been suspended, and his office given to a junior minister on whose loyalty Moulton could rely. As a result there was considerable dissatisfaction in Ha'apai, and Baker took advantage of the situation. On 4 January he held an open air service and invited Paula Vi to preach. About five hundred people attended. In the afternoon another service was held and this time the congregation numbered about a thousand. On the following day a meeting was held attended by all 'who loved the King more than Mr Moulton', and a 'Free Church of Tonga', Wesleyan in doctrine but independent of the Sydney Conference, was launched.¹⁴

Baker then returned to Vava'u to acquaint the King of the developments at Ha'apai. According to Catholic sources Tupou was greatly displeased with his Premier for taking matters into his own hands, and only after Baker had humbled himself, Tonga-fashion, by a ritual presentation of a fei'umu of baked food, would the King listen to his explanations.¹⁵ Eventually, however, Baker won Tupou's support for his coup, and on 14 January the Free Church was established in Vava'u by

14 Ibid., p.40; Baker in evidence before the High Commissioner, 'Notes of the Chief Judicial Commissioner', F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 156; the Fiji Times, 14 March 1885, letter from 'A Correspondent', n.d.

15 P. Soane Malia [Monseigneur Bishop Blanc], Chez les Méridionaux du Pacifique (Lyons and Paris, 1910), p.226.

proclamation of the King. On the following day Watkin severed his connection with the Sydney Conference and accepted the office of President of the Tongan Church.¹⁶

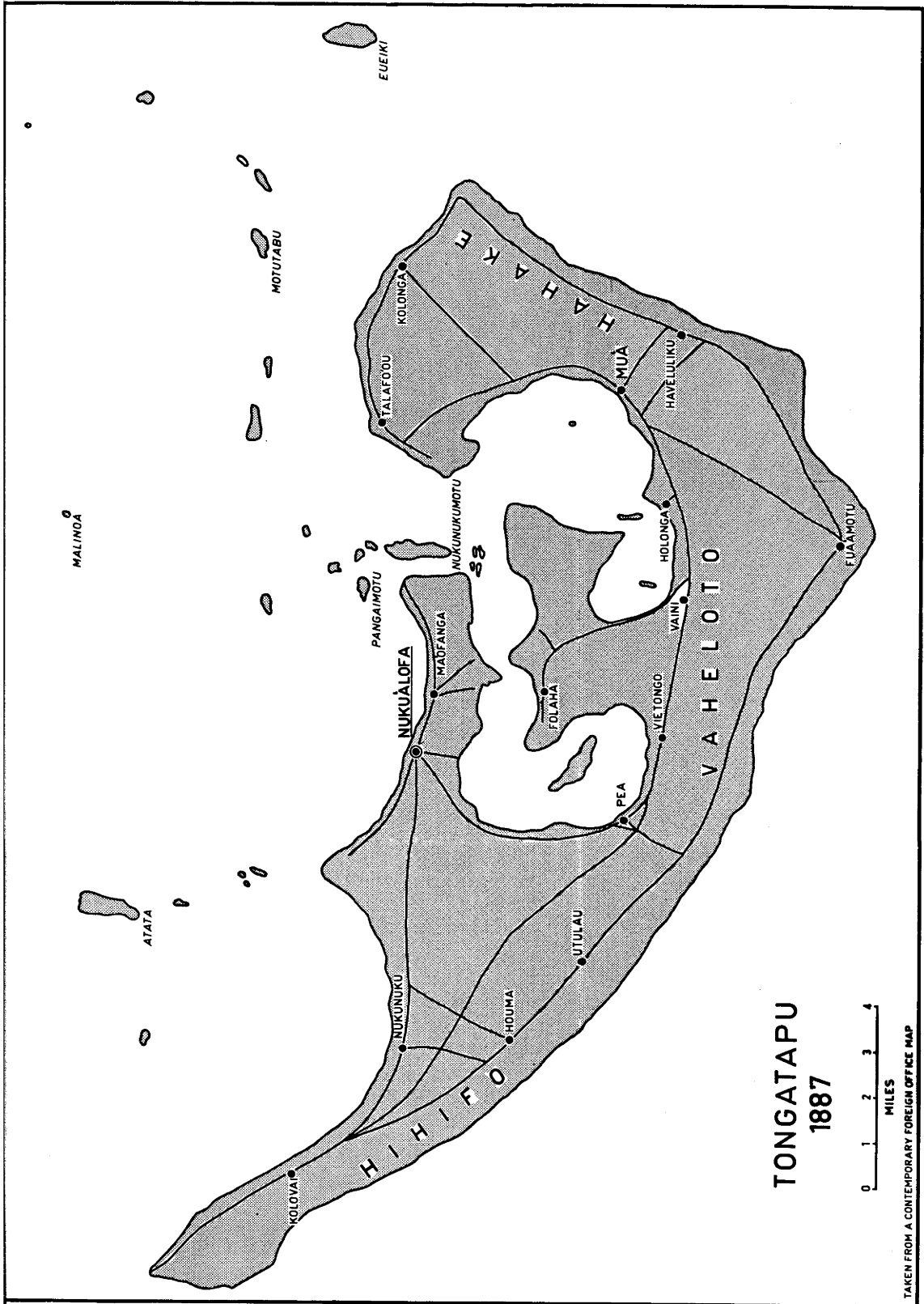
In Vava'u the establishment of the Free Church met no opposition whatever, and almost without exception chiefs, clergy and people defected from the Wesleyan Church to join the church of the King.¹⁷ From the Tongan viewpoint this was not a reprehensible desertion of their faith, but merely obedience to a lawful demand of the King. One minister, who had given long and faithful service to the Wesleyan Church, explained his defection to the Rev. Lorimer Fison:

King George is our Chief, and we are bound to obey all his lawful commands. He expressed his will that we should join the Free Church of Tonga. Was that command lawful or unlawful? If he had told us to go to the Church of Rome or in any way to abandon Methodism, we would have been justified in refusing, and we would have taken the consequences of our refusal. But he did not do this. The Free Church is a Methodist Church. We have the same Bible we had before, the same doctrine, the same discipline, the same worship, the same God and Saviour Jesus Christ, our Lord. The only difference is that we are independent of outside rule. Therefore the King's command was a lawful command, and to disobey it an act of rebellion.¹⁸

16 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.15.

17 Ibid.

18 The New Zealand Herald, 16 March 1887, letter from the Rev. Lorimer Fison, n.d.



TONGATAPU
1887



TAKEN FROM A CONTEMPORARY FOREIGN OFFICE MAP

The people of Ha'apai received the King's proclamation in very much the same way as the people of Vava'u, Baker called in at Lifuka on his way back to Tonga to acquaint the chiefs of the King's proclamation, and he had the satisfaction of seeing the great majority of the people join the Free Church in obedience to the King's command.¹⁹ In Tongatapu, however, Baker met considerable resistance. Moulton had visited Ha'apai to attend a District Meeting on 6 January, the day after Baker had held the inaugural meeting of the Free Church, and had hastened back to Tongatapu to warn his people of what had occurred, and to stiffen their resistance.²⁰ At a public meeting in Zion Church he announced: 'There is a new thing happened in the land; there is a new religion set up'.²¹ He exhorted his flock to stand firm, and at least two Tongans spoke in support of him. 'Uiliame Mailuaki denounced Baker as 'the big deceiving Papalangi'; and Kēlepi 'Otuhouma called him 'a tumour filled with matter'.²² Thus encouraged, large numbers began rallying to Moulton's support, the majority probably for reasons that were

19 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.15.

20 Ibid., p.14.

21 Examination of the King of Tonga [by Sir Charles Mitchell], 29 March 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.6.

22 Moulton in evidence before the High Commissioner, 'Notes of the Chief Judicial Commissioner', F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 147.

genuinely religious, but a significant minority for what Moulton's assistant, the Rev. E.E. Crosby, admitted were 'mixed motives'.²³ The sudden conversion of this latter group Moulton regarded as a special manifestation of Providence. In February he reported: 'numbers of the wild young men have had their hearts touched and have joined the Society',²⁴ and in March he recalled how 'God had poured his Holy Spirit on irreligious young men and women who joined in such numbers that the loss of the old adherents was scarcely felt'.²⁵ It seems, however, that Moulton did not allow sufficiently for profane influences. Prominent among 'the wild young men' were Tōpui, Leka and Tupouto'a, who soon became the unofficial leaders and spokesmen of the Wesleyans in Hahake.²⁶ Many others seem to have been political partisans who had supported the Mu'a Parliament and who saw in the religious dispute an opportunity to reaffirm their opposition to Baker and his Government. Thus from its inception the confrontation of Free Church and Wesleyan in Tongatapu was exacerbated by

23 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.48, letter from Crosby dated 15 June 1885.

24 Ibid., p.21, letter from Moulton dated 10 February 1885.

25 Ibid., letter from Moulton dated 28 March 1885.

26 Eliesa Leka, Usaia Tobui and Jione Tubouto'a to Misa Saimone [Mr Symonds], 1 June 1885, F3/2/85, no.32.

political differences and, at least in part, developed into a bitter struggle between the Government and its political opponents. Caught between this hammer and anvil were those Tongans who for the sake of conscience and conviction remained loyal to Moulton and the Wesleyan connection. Their lot was desperate.

Baker and Watkin arrived in Tongatapu on 27 January and by this time the opposition movement was well established. A meeting of all chiefs and Government officials was held in Nuku'alofa and Baker read a letter from the King which ordered: 'If you have any love for me, join at once the Wesleyan Free Church of Tonga and set it up in your respective towns'. All who refused would lose their title and government office.²⁷ Under these conditions the majority of the notables embraced the new Church, but several refused. Kēlepi 'Otuhouma, a chief and the magistrate at 'Eua, refused to turn, and justified his decision in a calm and dignified statement which encouraged other waverers to stand firm. The general tenor of this reply was told to a later enquiry:

I said I loved the King, and prized my position in the Government, and my pay, and my inheritance and title possessed by my ancestors, but that I would not barter my religion for these things. I wished that the King's word touched some

27 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.19, letter from Crosby dated 3 February 1885.

worldly matter, a war for instance. In that I would do my best for the King. Or a public debt - I would help. The difficulty was the King gave orders about the lotu. That concerned myself alone.²⁸

Others followed 'Otuhuoma's lead. Tēvita Lātukefu, the Town Officer of Kolovai, told Baker:

I wished to remain a Wesleyan because I obtained spiritual light in that Church. The one thing that was clear to my mind was that it was not the part of the Government to set up a Church, but that it was the work for priests.²⁹

Altogether eleven notables, five of them hereditary chiefs, refused to join the Free Church, and Baker, acting on the King's authority, deprived them of their titles and dismissed them from office.³⁰

Following the meeting with the chiefs and officials, Baker and Watkin visited several important towns, holding ngaahi fono, reading the King's proclamation and exhorting the people to join the Free Church. However they met with very limited success.³¹ The people were confused by the conflicting arguments put forward by Moulton and Baker,

28 In evidence before the High Commissioner, 'Notes of the Chief Judicial Commissioner', F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 4a.

29 In evidence before the High Commissioner, 'Notes of the Chief Judicial Commissioner', F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 4.

30 'Schedule of Complaints put in by Mr Moulton...', charges I and II, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.5.

31 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, pp.20, 21.

and hesitated to commit themselves. Moulton's most recent move had been to publish a circular letter to the people of Tonga warning that Baker's ngaahi fono were contrary to the constitution and violated the British treaty. He promised that a British man-of-war would intervene to humble Baker and secure the rights of Wesleyans.³² This letter was intended to encourage Wesleyans to stand firm, but it had another very significant effect: Baker wrote an angry reply to Moulton's letter ridiculing the idea of British intervention,³³ but nevertheless he immediately relinquished the direction of the campaign to establish the Free Church to his Tongan associates. Evidently he feared that Moulton's threat might contain a grain of truth, and wanted to give no grounds for the High Commissioner to exercise his powers of summary deportation against him.

Once the task of carrying out the King's orders had been delegated to Tongans, the campaign assumed a much more coercive character. Towards the end of February Ngū held a fono in Nuku'alofa, and ordered the people in blunt and peremptory terms

32 J.E. Moultoni to the Kaiga Toga [The People of Tonga], 13 February 1885, Koe Fanoganogo Fakabuleaga, 21 May 1887, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

33 Baker to Moulton, 14 February 1885, Tonga Government White Book in re Wesleyan Secession, p.11.

to join the Free Church. His threats to recalcitrants were so plain that Moulton wrote:

...our minister who attended came away in very low spirits and told me that it would be a wonder if we had any adherents left.³⁴

Ngū expressed his determination to hold ngaahi fono all over Tonga to bring the matter to a successful conclusion, but he was not permitted to carry out this intention. On 11 March 1885, while engaged in conversation with Baker, Ngū was seized by a heart attack, and died before medical aid could be summoned.³⁵

The body of the Crown Prince was taken to 'Uiha for burial and the ceremony was attended by all the principal chiefs and officials in the Group. Despite the solemnity of the occasion the church controversy frequently intruded: Wesleyans were excluded from the faikava ceremony, which was an important part of the obsequies,³⁶ and for the religious service Wesleyans were sent off to worship by themselves at Felemea while the church at 'Uiha, in spite of loud protests from the Rev. E. Crosby, was taken over for the use of the Free Church

34 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.21, letter from Moulton, 28 March 1885.

35 Ibid.; the Fiji Times, 13 June 1885, letter from 'A Correspondent' dated 16 March 1885.

36 Crosby to Baker, 20 March 1885, Tonga Government White Book in re Wesleyan Secession, p.3.

worshippers.³⁷ After the funeral the King held a fono and told the gathered chiefs that he was determined that the Free Church should be the only Methodist body in Tonga. He gave his people until the end of May to join his Church, at which time, he informed them, he would come to Tongatapu accompanied by loyal warriors from Vava'u and Ha'apai, to deal with any Tongan who had not complied with his wishes. He added: 'If I say there will be mischief, there will be mischief'.³⁸

The King's fono at 'Uiha marked the beginning of real persecution in Tonga. The chiefs had received direct personal instructions from the King and felt justified in making their own arrangements for carrying them out. They began holding ngaahi fono as soon as they returned to Tongatapu. The first was held at Nuku'alofa on 27 March;³⁹ others followed in rapid succession in all the towns and villages. Halaholo, the chief of 'Eua, held his fono on 30 March, and told his

37 Baker to Crosby, 21 March 1885, Tonga Government White Book in re Wesleyan Secession, p.3; Crosby to Baker, 23 March 1885, Tonga Government White Book in re Wesleyan Secession, p.4.

38 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, pp. 25, 26, letter from Moulton dated 28 March 1885; the Fiji Times, 16 May 1885, letter from 'Our Own Correspondent' dated 4 April 1885.

39 Ibid.

people:

The King's will is that you should change your religion. And don't you delay. If any of you hold on and hinder you will find yourself in an evil case. We can do what we like with you.⁴⁰

Many joined the Free Church on the spot, and were allowed to go home. Halaholo then turned his attention to the recalcitrants. Lūpeni Fehi'a gave evidence at a later investigation:

I remember Halaholo thrashing a man called Josepha Mau because he would not join the Free Church.... Halaholo took a stick and thrashed him. He broke one of his ribs. While beating him he asked him if he would change over. Josepha refused. Halaholo kept on thrashing him until he said he was Free Church. Josepha is still an invalid [two years later] from the effects of the beating.⁴¹

Even under treatment such as this, however, many refused to turn over. A young woman, 'Akanesi Kaufo'ou, testified:

I am from Eua. I was beaten for refusing to be Free Church.... After I was bound the order was given to beat me.... I lay on the ground and they went on beating me until my mother said she wished they would kill me instead of torturing me. I lay down in my house. I could not move. I ate nothing for three days. I did not expect to live. I am still a Wesleyan.⁴²

40 Statement by Lese Hake, 6 April 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.

41 In evidence before the High Commissioner, 'Notes of the Chief Judicial Commissioner', F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 7.

42 Ibid., item 37.

On 18 April 'Ata held a fono at Kolovai to warn his people that if they were disobedient to the King's order they would be punished. He told them:

...after this think quickly what you will do, for a fono will be held on Monday of a remarkably warm character.⁴³

P.S. Bloomfield was a witness at the fono which followed. He testified:

...I was at Hihifo. I remember a number of women being thrashed to induce them to go over to the Free Church. The chief, Ata, flogged five or six women for refusing to go over.... Between the floggings he asked if they would turn over. The instrument was a long horsewhip. One of them was a grey-haired old woman, I should think about sixty.⁴⁴

Similar incidents were reported from all over Tonga.

At Pea, Lavaka held a fono at which Wesleyans were forced to sit for seven hours in the sun.⁴⁵ At

Ha'akame 'Uiliame Valu deprived all Wesleyans of their tax-lands.⁴⁶ Lavaka told the Wesleyans of Folaha that 'Mr. Moulton is your King', and banished them to seek refuge in Moulton's house; their goods

43 Affidavit of Lutui, 20 April 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.

44 In evidence before the High Commissioner, 'Notes of the Chief Judicial Commissioner', F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 16.

45 Affidavits of 'Uiliame Moala, Baula Fineofa, Tobaiasi Finau, 4 April 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.

46 Affidavit of Tu'i Vuli, 29 April 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.

were plundered by the Free Church adherents.⁴⁷

By mid-April the Wesleyans of 'Ahau, Pea, Nukuhitolu, Kolovai and 'Eua were all seeking sanctuary with Moulton.⁴⁸

Similar measures were applied to the Wesleyan remnant in Ha'apai, Two girls of Hā'ano who refused to join the Free Church were taken by their chief to the rocky uninhabited isle of Kao and ordered to leap into the surf and swim to the rocks. Faced with the prospect of almost certain drowning the girls gave way and joined the Free Church.⁴⁹ Shortly afterwards all the Wesleyans of Lofanga were banished to Kao, where the only food was coconuts and wild roots. Heamasi Fonua testified:

I was amongst those banished to an island called Kao on account of not joining the Free Church; about eighty of us were banished; ...when I was Kao I lived upon roots; I was almost dying with hunger.⁵⁰

The chiefs also turned their attention to Wesleyan

47 Affidavit of Inoke Funaki, 2 April 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.

48 Moulton to Baker, 1 April 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.; Baker to Moulton, 16 April 1885, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa; Moulton to Symonds, 15 May 1885, F3/2/85, no.7.

49 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.41.

50 In evidence before the High Commissioner, 'Notes of the Chief Judicial Commissioner', F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 57.

property. The seizure of the Wesleyan Church at 'Uiha for Ngū's funeral service had established a precedent, and during April 1885 dozens of churches were confiscated by the chiefs. On 29 March Moulton appealed to Baker against the action of Laisiki, who had taken possession of the church at 'Ahau.⁵¹ The following day he reported that forcible possession had been taken of the churches at Ha'akame and Buke.⁵² On 9 April he complained of the seizure of the churches at Pea, Veitongo, Tofoa and Havelu.⁵³ By the middle of the month many more cases had occurred. The circumstances attending the seizure of the Talafo'ou church on 17 April were particularly brutal. Moulton reported the case to Tu'uhetoka:

...the town officer entered the church while Jiosuia Lolohea, the minister, was conducting the morning service.... Before the minister had finished praying the man laid hold of him and dashed him against one side and then against the other side while he was still praying, and then threw him outside. The chief of the town stood with a billet of wood and shouted to drag him to be beaten, and a lot of people entered the church and took possession and drove us out.⁵⁴

-
- 51 Moulton to Baker, 29 March 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.
- 52 Moulton to Baker, 30 March 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.
- 53 Moulton to Baker, 9 April 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.
- 54 Moulton to Tu'uhetoka, 17 April 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.

By 1 May 1885 every church in Vava'u, all but one in Ha'apai, and a large number in Tongatapu had been taken over by the Free Church.⁵⁵

Baker made many attempts to restrain the chiefs for reports of the persecutions, frequently exaggerated, were being given wide publicity in the world press and were causing him acute embarrassment.⁵⁶ When the first case of persecution was reported by Moulton, Baker assured him:

I have instructed the Minister of Police to inform him the Government will not in any way sanction or permit any interference with the performance of worship, and any one so doing will, on conviction, be punished according to law, and that all Tongan subjects are free to perform their worship as they deem fit, in accordance with the dictates of their own consciences.⁵⁷

When the dispossessed Wesleyans began moving from their villages to Nuku'alofa Baker ordered their immediate repatriation,⁵⁸ and as soon as he received

55 'Report of a Deputation Appointed by the General Conference of 1884 to Visit the Friendly Islands', Tongan Mission Affairs 1884-1889.

56 E.E. Crosby [ed.], The Persecutions in Tonga as Narrated by Onlookers and Now Taking Place (London, 1886), is a collection of 34 articles which appeared in newspapers and journals in Britain, New Zealand, Australia and Fiji between March 1885 and April 1886, condemning Baker for his part in the persecutions.

57 Baker to Moulton, 31 March 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.

58 Baker to Moulton, 2 April 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.

word of the Ha'apai Wesleyans being marooned on Kao he sent a vessel loaded with food to succour them and carry them back to their homes.⁵⁹

However in most cases his protests were mere straws in the wind; the chiefs had received their instructions directly from the King and tended to ignore the Premier's expostulations. The control of the movement had slipped from his grasp and events were shaping with a logic and momentum of their own. Moulton, of course, claimed that Baker encouraged the chiefs to persecute Wesleyans,⁶⁰ but this accusation is not supported by the evidence. Baker had nothing to gain and much to lose from the unfavourable publicity that the persecutions generated. The opinion of J.B. Thurston, who visited Tonga in September 1885, that 'the Government had beyond doubt, lost control of its usual executive power and was unable to enforce proper control of the people'⁶¹ seems to be a correct appraisal of the situation.

A chance to resolve the dispute amicably came in May 1885 with the visit of a deputation from

59 Evidence before the High Commission, 'Notes of the Chief Judicial Commissioner', F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, items 57, 69, 72, 101, 103.

60 J.E. Moulton, Ki He Jiaji Uesiliana 'o Toga [pamphlet], 31 March 1885, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

61 Thurston to Salisbury, 30 September 1885, F.O.C.P. 5159, no.117.

the General Conference armed with powers to negotiate a settlement of differences. Baker's only pre-condition was the removal of Moulton from Tonga, but this the deputation refused to consider unless Watkin were also removed. Baker refused to sacrifice his friend and ally, and the deputation left Tonga empty handed.⁶² Meanwhile the persecutions continued.

By the end of May the situation was building up rapidly towards a climax. On the one hand Moulton had promised that the High Commissioner would come to Tonga on a man-of-war to aid the harassed Wesleyans, and was exhorting his adherents to hold on until his arrival. In one of the many Tongan language pamphlets which he issued during this time he wrote:

Shall we deny our Lord who died to save us,
yes the God who bought us with his blood?
How shall we be able to stand before Him after
we have denied Him? Be brave. In a short
time we shall reach safety and peace. Think
of the words of Jesus, '...Trust me unto death
and I shall give you the crown of Life'.⁶³

On the other hand the chiefs were trying desperately to 'convert' all their followers before the King paid his promised visit to Tongatapu, for disobedience on the part of their people was felt by the chiefs

62 'Report of a Deputation Appointed by the General Conference of 1884 to Visit the Friendly Islands', Tongan Mission Affairs 1884-1889.

63 Moulton, Ki He Jiaji Uesiliana 'o Toga, 31 March 1885.

to reflect on their own loyalty. Tu'ilupou expressed this feeling succinctly at his fono, when he scolded his people:

Why do you persist about the Church?...Are you not fighting the King? I am living here in fear of Tupou, for it is not as if you are blamed, for who are you? Are you not about as important in the eyes of Tupou as some fowl's feathers? It is my name which is carried to Tupou!⁶⁴

During June the persecutions continued, while Tongatapu waited for the arrival of Tupou which, it was widely rumoured, would be the signal for the wholesale slaughter of all the remaining Wesleyans.⁶⁵ The King arrived on 4 July, accompanied by sixty boats containing some eighteen hundred warriors armed with guns, axes and clubs.⁶⁶ All Wesleyans were ordered to attend a King's fono in Nuku'alofa, at which it was expected that the executions would take place. By this time the Wesleyans numbered only two thousand but they had the zeal of martyrs. Moulton reported:

One woman, who had just given birth to a child, said to her husband, 'You go down, but promise me as soon as the hanging begins, you will come and fetch me, and let us die together'.

Another, an old man too frail to walk, came on a

64 Statement of Lei, 2 April 1885, F3/2/85, no.1, enc.

65 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.52, letter from Moulton dated 1 August 1885.

66 Ibid.

horse and, arriving late, told his friends, 'I was afraid I would be too late to be hanged'. The fono was to be held early in the morning and before daylight a Wesleyan service was held in Zion Church. The congregation was still at prayer when the lali was beaten for the fono to begin, and the Wesleyans moved down to the mala'e in a compact body. What followed was an almost ridiculous anticlimax. There were no hangings. There were no beatings. The King addressed the gathering quietly, told them that he was displeased with them and dismissed them to their houses.⁶⁷

Tupou's lenity and restraint were quite unexpected. Reports had reached Tonga of statements made by the King in Vava'u intimating that no quarter would be offered to the Tongan Wesleyans. The circumstances of his arrival, with a large body of armed men, also suggested that his intentions were not peaceable. What then restrained him? Moulton believed that the quiet heroism of the Wesleyans moved him to compassion,⁶⁸ and this is a possible explanation. However it is more likely that Baker intervened to pacify the King and to make a plea for the restoration of law and order. But whatever his motivation, Tupou's moderation was

67 Ibid.; the Fiji Times, 22 August 1885, unsigned letter dated 6 August 1885.

68 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.52, letter from Moulton dated 1 August 1885.

a very effective counter to the complaints of Moulton. It also had an unlooked for effect upon the Wesleyans, for large numbers of them, being denied the glories of martyrdom, quietly defected to the Free Church: between July and September Wesleyan numbers dwindled from two thousand to seven hundred.⁶⁹ The temperate behaviour of the King also acted as a brake on the excited passions of the chiefs, and gross persecution ceased. Baker was able to regain control of the situation, and one of his first acts was to confirm the Wesleyan Church in its rights of tenure to all property held under legally valid leases.⁷⁰ Thus, when J.B. Thurston, the Acting High Commissioner, arrived in Tonga in September, order had been restored and the country was returning to normal. All Wesleyans, it is true, were detained in Nuku'alofa, because the King, angered at Moulton's repeated assertions that a British man-of-war would come to rescue his adherents, had ordered them to wait in Nuku'alofa for the ship to come, but otherwise there was little evidence of persecution. Thurston did not come on a warship, but on an ordinary cargo vessel, and he refused to take any action on behalf of the Wesleyans or against Baker. He merely counselled moderation, and having received assurances that

69 Thurston to Salisbury, 30 September 1885, F.O.C.P. 5159, no.117.

70 Ibid.

the Wesleyans would be gradually permitted to disperse, he returned to Fiji.⁷¹

After September 1885 there was a gradual relaxing of the tensions in Tonga. On 13 October the Hahake Wesleyans were allowed to return to their homes,⁷² and by 5 December the same privilege had been extended to all the others.⁷³ Persecution, at least in its more blatant forms, ceased and Baker seemed prepared to leave the Wesleyans in relative peace, probably hoping that they would wither on the vine. Nor was such a hope unjustified. The return of their church properties had saddled the Wesleyan remnant with crippling burdens; by law property holders were required to keep their lands weeded, hoed and regularly swept,⁷⁴ and with their depleted numbers these tasks became very onerous, especially as most Wesleyans were at this time very busy rebuilding their plundered homes, cutting copra for their taxes and planting their food crops.⁷⁵ In Vava'u, for instance, there were

71 Thurston to Salisbury, 30 September 1885, F.O.C.P. 5199, no.117.

72 Crosby to Symonds, 13 October 1885, F3/2/85, no.161.

73 Moulton to Symonds, 5 December 1885, F3/2/85, no.183a.

74 'An Act Relative to Roads and Malaes and Premises', approved 23 October 1882, reprinted in Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.62, 23 November 1887.

75 Crosby to Symonds, 12 February 1885, F3/2/86, no.10.

only six Wesleyans. Crosby wrote:

Yet every week the Government officials compel those few folk to sweep up all our town sites through Vavau and its islands. The result is that they are worked to death, and have to slave far more than the prisoners.⁷⁶

Under these circumstances the enthusiasm of the Wesleyans began to wane.

It was Moulton who provoked fresh disturbances. In October 1885 he sent a 'missionary' to Vava'u to win back converts from the Free Church.⁷⁷ This was a serious threat to Baker's whole project. He responded by securing from the 1885 Parliament a Law of Six and of Thirty making it illegal for a church to hold services in a town unless it had six adherents, who were 'rightful inhabitants', living there, and for any minister to live in a town where he had fewer than thirty adherents who were 'rightful inhabitants'.⁷⁸ This law effectively prevented any further proselytising by Moulton. Moreover the phrase 'rightful inhabitant' was left to be interpreted by the Tongan judges, who frequently used it as a weapon against the Wesleyans. Crosby reported:

76 Ibid.

77 Waterhouse, Secession and Persecution, p.64; letter from Moulton dated 19 October 1885.

78 The Fiji Times, 10 February 1886; letter from 'Our Own Correspondent', n.d.; the Fiji Times, 10 April 1886, letter from 'A Correspondent', 23 February 1886.

The number is only six, but unfortunately Mr Baker has seen fit to add a qualification which has speedily borne fruit, bitter fruit. They must be totonu [rightful] whatever that may mean, and the judges have decided that it means whatever interpretation will prevent the Wesleyans from counting six totonu.⁷⁹

The law gave rise to a great deal of petty persecution. A typical situation was described by Crosby:

In Hofua we have a number of adherents but owing to the detention of the people in Nuku'alofa we have had no preaching there for some time. We resolved to begin with the New Year having, as we counted six adults, rightful inhabitants. The Government Representative in the town admitted only two, counting a father, but refusing to count his two children. The Minister of Police, on being appealed to, counted the children (who were adults, one being married) and thus recognised four. The other two whom we had counted were rightful inhabitants on their mother's side, and their father had settled in the town on his marriage to their mother. Yet they were not allowed to count, and we could not have the preaching.⁸⁰

By June 1886 there had been thirty separate prosecutions of Wesleyan native ministers for breaches of the Law of Six and of Thirty.⁸¹

During the remainder of 1886 pressure

79 Crosby to Symonds, 12 February 1886, F3/2/86, no.10.

80 Crosby to Symonds, 6 January 1886, F3/2/86, no.1.

81 Crosby to Rev. R. Sellors, 26 June 1886, F3/2/86, no.48.

was kept on the Wesleyans, but the religious dispute had ceased to occupy all of Baker's attention. From about September 1885 he had begun to turn his mind once more to secular matters and had carried out several important projects: by arrangement with the New Zealand Government a mail service had been arranged for Tonga and a Post Office opened in Nuku'alofa;⁸² Thurston had co-operated with Baker in gaining for Tonga a regular steamer service between Auckland and Nuku'alofa;⁸³ the High Commissioner's good offices had also led to negotiations with the British Government concerning the minting of a Tongan coinage to replace the debased Chilean silver.⁸⁴ Baker had also begun a programme of public works, including the construction of a wharf in Nuku'alofa⁸⁵ and a tramline to connect the wharf to the margin of the lagoon, so that bananas brought across the lagoon by canoe could be transported to the harbour for export.⁸⁶ Extensive plantings of Norfolk Island

82 'His Majesty's Speech at the Opening of the Legislative Assembly 1885', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.35, 2 December 1885.

83 Thurston to Salisbury, 19 September 1885, F.O.C.P. 5199, no.115.

84 Thurston to Salisbury, 19 September 1885, F.O.C.P. 5199, no.116.

85 'His Majesty's Speech at the Opening of the Legislative Assembly 1885', Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.35, 2 December 1885.

86 Ibid.

pines had been made in Nuku'alofa as part of a beautification project,⁸⁷ plans were well under way for the construction of a hospital,⁸⁸ and Baker had even begun considering the establishing of a library and art gallery.⁸⁹ The most important of Baker's achievements at this time was, however, the conclusion of a treaty of friendship between Tonga and the United States of America. Baker and G.H. Bates, the U.S. Commissioner for Samoa, had evidently been conducting private negotiations for some time⁹⁰ and, at the beginning of October 1886, Bates visited Tonga aboard the U.S.S. Mohican to conclude the formalities. The treaty, which was very similar to the German and British treaties with Tonga, was signed by Baker and Bates aboard the Mohican on 2 October,⁹¹ though final ratifications were not exchanged until September 1888.⁹²

87 The Fiji Times, 18 August 1886, letter from 'Our Own Correspondent' dated 26 July 1886.

88 The Fiji Times, 3 July 1886, letter from 'A Correspondent', 11 April 1886.

89 Ibid.

90 Thurston to Sir Julian Pauncefote, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 14 April 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.170.

91 President Grover Cleveland to the Senate of the United States, 3 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.215, enc.

92 Proclamation by President Cleveland of a Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Tonga, 18 September 1888, F.O.C.P. 5784, no.73, enc.

There was one task, however, which Baker had not undertaken: the restoration of his good name in the eyes of the world. During 1885 and 1886 he had been condemned over and over again in letters and articles in the outside press, but had refrained from answering them, preferring as he said; 'to leave all the scandal-mongering to the other side'.⁹³ But on 12 January 1887 he decided to reply to his critics. The Free Church was an accomplished fact, the Wesleyans a dwindling minority and the country was quiet. It was time to put the record straight and justify his policy and his actions. He did this in a long article written for publication in the Sydney Daily Telegraph.⁹⁴ Ironically, even while he was writing, four Tongans were waiting beside the road to assassinate him.

93 Baker to the Editor, Sydney Daily Telegraph, 12 January 1887, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 20/1887.

94 Ibid.

CHAPTER 11

AN ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION

ON the evening of 12 January 1887, while Baker was writing his apologia to the Sydney Daily Telegraph, five Tongans were waiting under the ovava tree near the King's palace to shoot him as he drove past on his regular evening visit to his office. This assassination attempt was a significant turning point in the career of Baker and in the history of Tonga, but the details of the plot have become obscured behind a veil of myth and legend. The following outline is accordingly based upon the testimony of the conspirators themselves, supplemented by evidence from contemporaries.

The five Tongans who lay in wait for Baker on the night of 12 January were Tavake, Palu, Naisa, Fehoko and Latu. Tavake was the son of Tōpui, the old Mu'a Parliament leader; the others were prisoners who had escaped from Nuku'alofa gaol on 5 September 1886. Palu had been serving a term for adultery and theft. Naisa, Fehoko and Latu, all men of Mu'a, had originally been convicted for minor offences, but had broken custody, stolen a boat and attempted to sail to Fiji; instead they had drifted to Ha'apai, where they had each been sentenced to two years work in irons, and for absconding while a prisoner Latu had been sentenced to an additional eight years, Naisa to an additional

six years and Fehoko to an additional two years labour.¹ Their original offences were probably merely boyish pranks, but the severity of the sentences passed on them had made them desperate. When they escaped for a second time in the company of Palu they stole four police rifles and made for the Hahake bush; whereupon they were declared outlaws and the police instructed to shoot them on sight.² On two occasions several hundred men had been sent to Hahake to search for them, but the people of Mu'a, the friends and relatives of the outlaws, had sent the search parties off on false trails, and on each occasion they had returned to Nuku'alofa empty-handed.³ For four months the outlaws remained at large and, with the connivance of local officials, they often visited Mu'a at night, where they were given food, shelter and encouragement.⁴

-
- 1 'Names of escaped Prisoners with their Offences and Terms of Punishment, Police Magistrates Office, Nukualofa, Tonga, April 23 1887', F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.24x.
 - 2 'The Massacre in Tonga', article by 'Our Tongan Correspondent' in the Fiji Times, 23 February 1887; T.G.B.B., Report of the Minister of Police in re attempted Assassination, May 1887.
 - 3 Baker in evidence before the Chief Judicial Commissioner for the Western Pacific, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 162.
 - 4 E.W. Parker to Sir Charles Mitchell, 19 January 1887, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 58/1887.

At about the same time Mu'a had also been receiving frequent visits from Mr Basil Thomson, a young magistrate from the Lau Islands in Fiji, who was spending his leave in Tonga. Thomson had stayed at the consulate in Nuku'alofa until Symonds left Tonga in November 1886, and had then spent most of his time at Mu'a with Tungī. Thomson was very critical of the Baker régime in Tonga, especially after his stay with Symonds, and while it is unlikely that he purposely spread sedition in Mu'a, he nevertheless discussed his views very openly.⁵ In Mu'a, where the political temperature was never much below ignition point, Thomson's criticism of government policies provided the stimulus for a new movement of opposition.

The original plot against Baker can only be reconstructed in shadowy outline from hints dropped by several witnesses and from a sifting of contemporary rumours. The main conspirators seem to have been Tuku'aho, the son of Tungī, Tu'ipelehake, the Governor of Ha'apai, and Laifone, the Crown Prince and Governor of Vava'u. Tuku'aho was to seize Baker, ship him to Fiji on the Sandfly and

5 Thomson, The Scene Changes, pp.49-53; Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, p.34; diary of Pro-Consul Giles, entry for 26 January 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.29; R.B. Leefe to Thurston, 7 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no. 73, enc.6; evidence of Soni Muli, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 144.

deliver him in irons to the High Commissioner. The Hahake soldiers, who were under Tuku'aho's command, would maintain order in Tonga during this period, while Tu'ipelehake and Laifone would prevent troops from Ha'apai and Vava'u from interfering. However, news of the conspiracy leaked out and became common rumour in Mu'a, and the outlaws, having heard it, approached Tōpui, Tuku'aho's cousin, with a suggestion that they could settle the matter much more effectively merely by shooting Baker;⁶ Tōpui, with Tuku'aho's approval, began holding secret meetings in Mu'a to discuss the suggestion. The meetings were attended by the four outlaws, Tōpui, and local firebrands and old Mu'a Parliament supporters including 'Aisea Kaumoto, Penisiō Hau, Lutoviko Tuhoko and possibly Leka.⁷ By the end of 1886 the group had arranged to get ammunition and additional firearms from a European and to assassinate Baker. An account of this meeting was later given in testimony by Penisiō Hau:

I know Filipi Taufu. I told him something

6 The best account of this plot, based on the confessions of the prisoners while on their way to execution, is given by E.W. Parker: Parker to Mitchell, 5 February 1886, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 41/1887.

7 Evidence of Lutoviko Tuhoko, F.O.C.P. 5527, no. 300, enc.10, item 142; Tu'uhetoka to the King of Tonga, 2 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no. 110, enc.28.

about the secret meetings held by Tobui [Tōpui] at Mua. I told him that one Sunday we went to Italale and were to remain there to meet Tobui after the service of the Wesleyans was over. Tobui was there. Naisa and Latu were there. Naisa said, 'Why are the arms not here?' Tobui said, 'I have written to the European and he will have them sent.' I and Naisa went and sat by the sea. Palu came and he said that he and Naisa would go and commit the assassination.It was the last Sunday in 1886.⁸

The European in question was Robert Hanslip. Soni Muli, who delivered Tōpui's letter, later testified:

Tobui came to me and said could I take a letter for him to Nukualofa to Mr Hanslip.... I went to Mr Hanslip's place and took the letter of Tobui to him...and I gave it and Mr Hanslip read it; after which Mr Hanslip wrote a letter and I took it with me to Mua to Tobui, and as I went Mr Hanslip cautioned me for no one to know anything at all about it, and I replied to Mr Hanslip, 'I will never tell anyone'.... I asked Tobui what was the meaning of the letter I took to Mr Hanslip and Tobui told me he wrote as to whether Mr Hanslip could let him have some guns, and Mr Hanslip replied he could do so. Tobui told me Mr Hanslip went up to the Mua with a bag of bullets and Tobui took them to Naisa, and Naisa gave them to Palu and Latu and Fehoko. Naisa said it was a bag of stolen bullets, but Fehoko replied, 'Perhaps these are the bullets from Mr Hanslip', but Tobui commanded that no one should tell they were bullets from Mr Hanslip.⁹

8 Evidence of Penisiō Hau, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 140.

9 Affidavit of Soni Muli, 5 March 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.40.

Two abortive attempts were made to assassinate Baker before 12 January 1887. Tōpui had passed word of the conspiracy to his old Mu'a Parliament colleague, Lavuso, who worked at Tupou College (according to Baker as head tutor; according to Moulton as a casual carpenter),¹⁰ and Lavuso determined to perform the task himself. On Christmas Eve 1886, with an accomplice from the College, probably Tuitavake, he went to Baker's house, ostensibly to seek medicine, but really to club him to death when he answered the door. This plan was foiled when Lavuso found Baker's yard crowded with Government College boys.¹¹ Then on New Year's Eve the outlaws waited for Baker to attend a 'watch night service' at the King's chapel, but for some reason this attempt also failed.¹² The outlaws came again to Nuku'alofa on the evening of 12 January, bringing with them Tōpui's son, Tavake, who had lived with Baker and knew his habits, and who came 'because it was the command of Tuku'aho for me to join in it'.¹³ They made no secret of their mission, for Sione Latuvaivai later recalled: 'I met Palu in the bush; he said he was going down to

10 Diary of Pro-Consul Giles, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.29, entry for 20 January 1887.

11 Evidence of Tavake, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc. 10, item 160.

12 T.G.B.B., Report of the Minister of Police in re attempted Assassination.

13 Evidence of Tavake.

shoot Mr Baker'.¹⁴ By nightfall the five had taken their positions by the road to wait for their quarry. But that night the moon came up before Baker emerged from his house and, fearful of being recognised, the assassins decided to postpone their attempt until the following evening. They retired to the Mala'e Kula, a large open square opposite Tupou College, and sent Tavake to seek a hiding place for the night. Tavake later testified:

The outlaws told me to go to Mr Hanslip's, and I beckoned to him to come out; he came out. I told him, 'I am here with the outlaws to assassinate Mr Baker'; but the moon had risen and we wanted a house. Mr Hanslip said, 'Go back to Mua; my abi is difficult because the people come and drink kava'. I went back to the men. They asked me to go and ask Tuitavake. He replied that his abi was also difficult. I came on and told the outlaws. Latu then told me to go to Lavuso. I asked Lavuso; he refused. I told Lavuso that if he sent us away we should shoot him. He said, 'All right. Come into the house.'¹⁵

Tavake, Fehoko, Naisa and Latu stayed that night and all the following day in Lavuso's house in the grounds of Tupou College, and word of their presence and their intentions circulated among students and staff, several of whom, including the Rev. Tēvita Fīnau, Sitiveni Fīnau, Fekau, Tuitavake and Nuku, came to visit them and discuss the plot.¹⁶ At nightfall on 13 January Tavake and

14 Evidence of Latuvaivai, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 145.

15 Evidence of Tavake.

16 Ibid.

the three outlaws, accompanied by Lavuso, went to the Beach Road to wait for Baker. Palu, meanwhile, had returned to Mu'a on the previous evening, probably to explain the delay to Tōpui, and came back again late that afternoon with a boy, Vuni. He called at Hanslip's house at dusk to collect an extra gun, and was advised by him: 'to persevere in accomplishing the thing, and by all means to escape to Mua and Tobui, and he would follow with some guns'. He then returned to the College to find that the others had already left. Taking Fekau, a College boy, with him he arrived at the road some distance from his friends just in time to hear several shots. A few seconds later Baker galloped past. He was moving so quickly that Palu was unable to get in a shot.¹⁷

In his official statement to Giles, the British Pro-Consul, Baker described what had happened:

After dinner on Thursday evening at 7.10 p.m. I ordered the buggy to be ready; got into it with my son and daughter [Shirley and Beatrice] ordering at the same time my driver to follow on with a case behind. I have not been in the habit of driving of an evening, but as we had a fresh and rather restive horse in the buggy, I told my son that I would drive.

17 Affidavit of Palu, 5 March 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.40; T.G.B.B., Report of the Minister of Police in re attempted Assassination.

I was sitting on the front seat, my daughter being seated immediately behind me, and my son sitting beside her. The horse being fresh was travelling rather fast, and as soon as it got near Mary Halawalo's house it shied at a native who was standing directly in the road; my son Shirley called out, 'that man has a gun' and immediately jumped out of the buggy and commanded him to put his gun down, stepping towards him as he spoke. I was unable to pull up the horse, but I noticed that there was another man, also with a gun, in a stooping position looking forward, evidently to see where I was, the light of the buggy lamp shining full on his face. There were two other men a little further on also with guns; and there was also what I took to be a woman at a little distance, and a reflection like the shadow of someone else a short distance from her. The horse was still travelling and my daughter jumped up from her seat and leaning forward threw her arms around me. I must have given the horse an extra pull on the right-hand rein and he made a swerve, when immediately a gun was fired by the man first seen...my son called out that he was shot, when my daughter immediately let go of me, and said as she jumped from the buggy 'I must go to Shirley, he is shot'. The horse being wounded, also gave a plunge, which caused my daughter to be thrown on the back of her head.¹⁸

The boy had been shot in the shoulder while the girl had received a wound in the thigh and had also injured her spine in the fall from the buggy. The story is continued from the memoir written by Lillian and Beatrice Shirley Baker:

18 'Official Report of the Rev. S.W. Baker in regard to the assault on himself and family on Thursday 13 January 1887', 15 January 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.73, enc.7.



The assassins turned and ran, as Dr Baker, in sickened fury, charged them unarmed. He caught the terrified horse and somehow brought it under control, leading it back to the trap. As a medical man he rendered what first aid was possible to his son and daughter, then drove them quickly back to Nukualofa for attention, calling up the police at the same time.¹⁹

However, with the passage of time the memory of the Misses Baker had evidently deteriorated, for the story of Baker's heroism did not appear in the contemporary account. According to Baker's affidavit, sworn two days after the event, as Beatrice fell to the ground:

She...called to me to drive on, and to my son Shirley to run, and as I did so Shirley told me to drive on as he would be all right. As the horse bolted around the corner of the King's Palace, past the Watkin's house, I tried to guide him towards Tui Toka's [Tu'uhetoka's] house and succeeded in doing so...and directed the people there to go down at once and see what assistance they could render.²⁰

Baker had a large measure of moral and political courage, but his behaviour at this time does not suggest that he possessed physical courage of the same order, an impression which is confirmed by the British Pro-Consul's description of Baker after the incident. He called on Baker later the same evening, and noted in his diary, with some distaste, that:

19 Baker, Memoirs, p.24.

20 Official Report of the Rev. S.W. Baker...13 January 1887.

Mr Baker was half-sitting, half-lying on a chair, having just recovered from a fainting fit (I was told he had had several previous to my arrival) and two natives were fanning him, whilst Mr Campbell was supporting him also. Mr Watkin and Mrs Baker were bathing his head with cold water and eau-de-cologne.²¹

The next day, at Baker's request, Giles flew the Union Jack over Baker's house to indicate that the family was under British protection.²²

On Friday 14 January both Baker and Tupou sent messages to Vava'u and Ha'apai informing the chiefs of the attempt on Baker's life and demanding that 'if the people had love for the Government they should come down'.²³ On the same afternoon the King called a meeting of the Tongatapu chiefs at Nuku'alofa, told them that the attack on Baker was an act of rebellion, and ordered them to gather armed men in their villages and to meet him at Vainī on the following Monday for an expedition into Hahake.²⁴ Tungī, whom the King strongly suspected of being implicated in the plot, left the meeting knowing that if he did not capture and hand over the outlaws himself within two days, his district would be ravaged by the King's men. On the Saturday morning

21 Diary of Pro-Consul Giles, entry for 13 January 1887.

22 Ibid., entry for 14 January 1887.

23 Evidence of Baker, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 162.

24 Evidence of Tomasi Katoa, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 134.

he sent Tōpui with a body of soldiers to bring in the outlaws; when the soldiers approached, the outlaws came out of the bush, but no attempt was made to capture them; instead they all stood in the road discussing the situation.²⁵ Meanwhile Tu'uhetoka had been sent by Tupou with a squad of police to search for the outlaws, and had been joined by the chiefs Lavaka and Fohe with some of their followers; upon reaching Tōpui's village of Holonga they had set about plundering it.²⁶ While Tōpui and his soldiers were arguing with the outlaws, some women brought word that Tu'uhetoka and his party were sacking Holonga and shooting Tōpui's pigs. Thereupon Tōpui proclaimed that he would lead his soldiers and the outlaws to fight the Government forces at Holonga, and sent word to Tungī of his intention.²⁷ Tungī sent word back that Tōpui was to come and explain the matter and when, in obedience to his chief, Tōpui returned to Mu'a, he was seized and bound. Tuku'aho played a prominent part in his capture.²⁸

Tu'uhetoka arrived with his men about three o'clock on the Saturday afternoon and Tungī

25 Evidence of Tongilava, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 130.

26 Evidence of Tu'uhetoka, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 135.

27 Evidence of Akapusi, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 165.

28 Evidence of Tongilava.

handed over Tōpui, and his old associate Leka, to his charge. Having heard that reprisals were being made against their relatives the outlaws also gave themselves up, Fehoko on Sunday morning, and the others the same afternoon.²⁹ They were thereupon taken to Nuku'alofa, put in irons and lodged in the gaol. Questioned by Tu'uhetoka, they revealed the names of all their accomplices, and over the succeeding days Tavake, Lavuso, 'Aisea Kaumoto, Fekau, Penisiō Hau, Lutoviko Tuhoko, Soni Muli, Sione Latuvaivai, Tēvita Fīnau, Sitiveni Fīnau, Nuku and several others were arrested, imprisoned and interrogated.

The trials of the prisoners began before the Chief Justice, 'Ahome'e, on 26 January. Giles was one of the few Europeans allowed to attend the sessions of the court, and he recorded his impressions in his diary:

I attended the Court this morning when five prisoners were tried, two of whom confessed to being principals in the attack on Mr Baker and his family. Everything was conducted in English style, except that it was so absolutely patent that Mr Baker was the moving spirit in the whole affair from the commencement to the end. The Registrar, Minister of Police, and even the Chief Justice were venturing hardly to speak without looking towards Mr Baker, whispering to him, or even passing notes across towards him. Even Mr Baker himself, I noticed, coloured and looked annoyed when

29 Diary of Pro-Consul Giles, entry for 16 and 17 January 1887.

they became too palpable in their appeals for his advice. The jury, who were I believe fairly chosen by ballot, appeared to have very little idea of their work, and never thought of electing a foreman from among their number.³⁰

The leading conspirators were charged with 'having borne arms in opposition to the Government of His Majesty' and with 'being an accomplice in the attempted assassination of 13 January'. On 31 January ten of the accused, Tōpui, Naisa, Fehoko, Latu, Palu, Lavuso, Tavake, 'Aisea Kaumoto, Fekau and Tuitavake, were found guilty and sentenced to death. Four others, Penisiō Hau, Latuvaivai, Soni Muli and Vuni, who had all turned King's evidence, were either pardoned or given light sentences. The Rev. Tēvita Fīnau, charged as an accessory, was sentenced to twenty-one years imprisonment.³¹ Several others remained in prison awaiting trial and sentence.

Having secured the death sentence for the leading conspirators, Baker was satisfied that an example had been made and wished it to be commuted. He therefore went to the King's palace with Tu'uhetoka on the night of 31 January and asked Tupou 'to have love to him and his family and to remember what he had done for Tonga, and to spare the condemned men and not to have them hung or shot'. The King,

30 Ibid., entry for 26 January 1887.

31 Evidence of 'Ahome'e, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 151.

however, refused to listen to his plea, but before leaving Baker begged the King to 'sleep over it' and to discuss the situation with him in the morning. But at 2 a.m. the King secretly sent his guard, Tomasi Tupuvale, to bring Tu'uhetoka to the palace; when the Minister of Police arrived he received orders to take six of the condemned men, Tōpui, 'Aisea Kaumoto, Lavuso, Naisa, Latu and Fehoko, to Malinoa, a sandy islet about eight miles off Nuku'alofa, and there execute them. The men, still in chains, were loaded on a schooner with fifty Vava'u and Ha'apai soldiers early in the morning. They were taken to Malinoa the same afternoon.³²

The execution was witnessed by Von Hagen, who heard of the matter that morning and rowed out to Malinoa with another European, George Bindeman. He later wrote an account of the proceedings:

We landed at 1.0 p.m., a full hour before the schooner, and found Laifone, the Crown Prince, and Tuiatoka [Tu'uhetoka] waiting. The graves had already been dug in the middle of the island. On the arrival of the schooner the firing parties were landed and marched up. They were composed of Haapai and Vavau men, twenty five of each. The victims were brought up one at a time by police, and they were all heavily ironed hand and foot. Each one was made to stand facing his grave with his back to the firing party.... The first to be called to die was the youngest of all. His name was Naisa. He had been so brutally abused in prison

32 Evidence of Tu'uhetoka, T.G.B.B., Report of the Minister of Police in re attempted Assassination.

that he could hardly drag his heavy irons through the deep sand. I kissed him as he passed me, poor boy. He was not twenty years of age.... They all died like men, standing upright with their irons on, and without a shiver or a flinch.... Laifone had the few coconuts that grew on the island plucked, saying that hereafter the island would be accursed. He seemed much affected, and once, during the shooting, he went away so as not to see the horrible spectacle. Tuiatoka...behaved like a fiend. He came out in his true colours and seemed to enjoy the butchery. He danced from one foot to the other in the Tongan fashion, and sang songs and Wesleyan hymns in derision.³³

When Tu'uhetoka reported the executions to Tupou, he was ordered to take the other four condemned men out to Malinoa and shoot them also. Baker intercepted him as he left the palace and countermanded the order, saying that he would talk to the King and tell him that he would resign if further executions took place. Baker's protests were evidently effective on this occasion, for the executions were indefinitely postponed, and eventually the sentences were commuted to banishment.³⁴

The assassination attempt had significant consequences for the whole of Tongan society, and produced ripples in capitals far from the shores of the Kingdom. One of the immediate consequences in Tonga was a renewed and ruthless persecution of the Wesleyans. This group, it is true, had provided

33 Von Hagen, 'The Mallinoa Massacre', in the Fiji Times, 23 March 1887.

34 Evidence of Tu'uhetoka.

several members of the cabal which had hatched the plot, and Tupou College boys had given the outlaws their support, but the conspiracy was not in any sense a Wesleyan conspiracy. Baker, however, possibly because the fright and strain he had suffered distorted his judgement, or possibly because he saw the opportunity to discredit Moulton completely, laid the whole responsibility for the plot on the Wesleyans. In an account of the affair which he wrote for the New Zealand Herald on 24 January he claimed:

It is a true saying 'murder will out' and several in connection with the affair having turned King's evidence it has placed the Government in a position to prosecute not only the murderers, but many of their accomplices and has revealed a state of things with regard to Mr Moulton's supporters which will astonish the world. Mr Moulton's bosom friend being prime mover in the case, and Mr Moulton's friends having not only devised the scheme, but laid out the plan which was to have been followed by a civil war in the land.³⁵

The King also believed that the attempted assassination of Baker was part of a Wesleyan plot, and with his connivance a campaign of terror was launched against the remaining Wesleyans. It began with the arrival of the men from Ha'apai and Vava'u who had come to Tongatapu in answer to the King's

35 A copy of the original of this article was sent to Giles and filed in his consular records (F3/2/87, no.108). The version published in the New Zealand Herald on 9 February 1887 was somewhat watered down.

The assassins turned and ran, as Dr Baker, in sickened fury, charged them unarmed. He caught the terrified horse and somehow brought it under control, leading it back to the trap. As a medical man he rendered what first aid was possible to his son and daughter, then drove them quickly back to Nukualofa for attention, calling up the police at the same time.¹⁹

However, with the passage of time the memory of the Misses Baker had evidently deteriorated, for the story of Baker's heroism did not appear in the contemporary account. According to Baker's affidavit, sworn two days after the event, as Beatrice fell to the ground:

She...called to me to drive on, and to my son Shirley to run, and as I did so Shirley told me to drive on as he would be all right. As the horse bolted around the corner of the King's Palace, past the Watkin's house, I tried to guide him towards Tui Toka's [Tu'uhetoka's] house and succeeded in doing so...and directed the people there to go down at once and see what assistance they could render.²⁰

Baker had a large measure of moral and political courage, but his behaviour at this time does not suggest that he possessed physical courage of the same order, an impression which is confirmed by the British Pro-Consul's description of Baker after the incident. He called on Baker later the same evening, and noted in his diary, with some distaste, that:

19 Baker, Memoirs, p.24.

20 Official Report of the Rev. S.W. Baker...13 January 1887.

Mr Baker was half-sitting, half-lying on a chair, having just recovered from a fainting fit (I was told he had had several previous to my arrival) and two natives were fanning him, whilst Mr Campbell was supporting him also. Mr Watkin and Mrs Baker were bathing his head with cold water and eau-de-cologne.²¹

The next day, at Baker's request, Giles flew the Union Jack over Baker's house to indicate that the family was under British protection.²²

On Friday 14 January both Baker and Tupou sent messages to Vava'u and Ha'apai informing the chiefs of the attempt on Baker's life and demanding that 'if the people had love for the Government they should come down'.²³ On the same afternoon the King called a meeting of the Tongatapu chiefs at Nuku'alofa, told them that the attack on Baker was an act of rebellion, and ordered them to gather armed men in their villages and to meet him at Vainī on the following Monday for an expedition into Hahake.²⁴ Tungī, whom the King strongly suspected of being implicated in the plot, left the meeting knowing that if he did not capture and hand over the outlaws himself within two days, his district would be ravaged by the King's men. On the Saturday morning

21 Diary of Pro-Consul Giles, entry for 13 January 1887.

22 Ibid., entry for 14 January 1887.

23 Evidence of Baker, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 162.

24 Evidence of Tomasi Katoa, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 134.

he sent Tōpui with a body of soldiers to bring in the outlaws; when the soldiers approached, the outlaws came out of the bush, but no attempt was made to capture them; instead they all stood in the road discussing the situation.²⁵ Meanwhile Tu'uhetoka had been sent by Tupou with a squad of police to search for the outlaws, and had been joined by the chiefs Lavaka and Fohe with some of their followers; upon reaching Tōpui's village of Holonga they had set about plundering it.²⁶ While Tōpui and his soldiers were arguing with the outlaws, some women brought word that Tu'uhetoka and his party were sacking Holonga and shooting Tōpui's pigs. Thereupon Tōpui proclaimed that he would lead his soldiers and the outlaws to fight the Government forces at Holonga, and sent word to Tungī of his intention.²⁷ Tungī sent word back that Tōpui was to come and explain the matter and when, in obedience to his chief, Tōpui returned to Mu'a, he was seized and bound. Tuku'aho played a prominent part in his capture.²⁸

Tu'uhetoka arrived with his men about three o'clock on the Saturday afternoon and Tungī

25 Evidence of Tongilava, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 130.

26 Evidence of Tu'uhetoka, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 135.

27 Evidence of Akapusi, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 165.

28 Evidence of Tongilava.

handed over Tōpui, and his old associate Leka, to his charge. Having heard that reprisals were being made against their relatives the outlaws also gave themselves up, Fehoko on Sunday morning, and the others the same afternoon.²⁹ They were thereupon taken to Nuku'alofa, put in irons and lodged in the gaol. Questioned by Tu'uhetoka, they revealed the names of all their accomplices, and over the succeeding days Tavake, Lavuso, 'Aisea Kaumoto, Fekau, Penisiō Hau, Lutoviko Tuhoko, Soni Muli, Sione Latuvaivai, Tēvita Fīnau, Sitiveni Fīnau, Nuku and several others were arrested, imprisoned and interrogated.

The trials of the prisoners began before the Chief Justice, 'Ahome'e, on 26 January. Giles was one of the few Europeans allowed to attend the sessions of the court, and he recorded his impressions in his diary:

I attended the Court this morning when five prisoners were tried, two of whom confessed to being principals in the attack on Mr Baker and his family. Everything was conducted in English style, except that it was so absolutely patent that Mr Baker was the moving spirit in the whole affair from the commencement to the end. The Registrar, Minister of Police, and even the Chief Justice were venturing hardly to speak without looking towards Mr Baker, whispering to him, or even passing notes across towards him. Even Mr Baker himself, I noticed, coloured and looked annoyed when

29 Diary of Pro-Consul Giles, entry for 16 and 17 January 1887.

they became too palpable in their appeals for his advice. The jury, who were I believe fairly chosen by ballot, appeared to have very little idea of their work, and never thought of electing a foreman from among their number.³⁰

The leading conspirators were charged with 'having borne arms in opposition to the Government of His Majesty' and with 'being an accomplice in the attempted assassination of 13 January'. On 31 January ten of the accused, Tōpui, Naisa, Fehoko, Latu, Palu, Lavuso, Tavake, 'Aisea Kaumoto, Fekau and Tuitavake, were found guilty and sentenced to death. Four others, Penisiō Hau, Latuvaivai, Soni Muli and Vuni, who had all turned King's evidence, were either pardoned or given light sentences. The Rev. Tēvita Fīnau, charged as an accessory, was sentenced to twenty-one years imprisonment.³¹ Several others remained in prison awaiting trial and sentence.

Having secured the death sentence for the leading conspirators, Baker was satisfied that an example had been made and wished it to be commuted. He therefore went to the King's palace with Tu'uhetoka on the night of 31 January and asked Tupou 'to have love to him and his family and to remember what he had done for Tonga, and to spare the condemned men and not to have them hung or shot'. The King,

30 Ibid., entry for 26 January 1887.

31 Evidence of 'Ahome'e, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 151.

however, refused to listen to his plea, but before leaving Baker begged the King to 'sleep over it' and to discuss the situation with him in the morning. But at 2 a.m. the King secretly sent his guard, Tomasi Tupuvale, to bring Tu'uhetoka to the palace; when the Minister of Police arrived he received orders to take six of the condemned men, Tōpui, 'Aisea Kaumoto, Lavuso, Naisa, Latu and Fehoko, to Malinoa, a sandy islet about eight miles off Nuku'alofa, and there execute them. The men, still in chains, were loaded on a schooner with fifty Vava'u and Ha'apai soldiers early in the morning. They were taken to Malinoa the same afternoon.³²

The execution was witnessed by Von Hagen, who heard of the matter that morning and rowed out to Malinoa with another European, George Bindeman. He later wrote an account of the proceedings:

We landed at 1.0 p.m., a full hour before the schooner, and found Laifone, the Crown Prince, and Tuiatoka [Tu'uhetoka] waiting. The graves had already been dug in the middle of the island. On the arrival of the schooner the firing parties were landed and marched up. They were composed of Haapai and Vavau men, twenty five of each. The victims were brought up one at a time by police, and they were all heavily ironed hand and foot. Each one was made to stand facing his grave with his back to the firing party.... The first to be called to die was the youngest of all. His name was Naisa. He had been so brutally abused in prison

32 Evidence of Tu'uhetoka, T.G.B.B., Report of the Minister of Police in re attempted Assassination.

that he could hardly drag his heavy irons through the deep sand. I kissed him as he passed me, poor boy. He was not twenty years of age.... They all died like men, standing upright with their irons on, and without a shiver or a flinch.... Laifone had the few coconuts that grew on the island plucked, saying that hereafter the island would be accursed. He seemed much affected, and once, during the shooting, he went away so as not to see the horrible spectacle. Tuiatoka...behaved like a fiend. He came out in his true colours and seemed to enjoy the butchery. He danced from one foot to the other in the Tongan fashion, and sang songs and Wesleyan hymns in derision.³³

When Tu'uhetoka reported the executions to Tupou, he was ordered to take the other four condemned men out to Malinoa and shoot them also. Baker intercepted him as he left the palace and countermanded the order, saying that he would talk to the King and tell him that he would resign if further executions took place. Baker's protests were evidently effective on this occasion, for the executions were indefinitely postponed, and eventually the sentences were commuted to banishment.³⁴

The assassination attempt had significant consequences for the whole of Tongan society, and produced ripples in capitals far from the shores of the Kingdom. One of the immediate consequences in Tonga was a renewed and ruthless persecution of the Wesleyans. This group, it is true, had provided

33 Von Hagen, 'The Malinoa Massacre', in the Fiji Times, 23 March 1887.

34 Evidence of Tu'uhetoka.

several members of the cabal which had hatched the plot, and Tupou College boys had given the outlaws their support, but the conspiracy was not in any sense a Wesleyan conspiracy. Baker, however, possibly because the fright and strain he had suffered distorted his judgement, or possibly because he saw the opportunity to discredit Moulton completely, laid the whole responsibility for the plot on the Wesleyans. In an account of the affair which he wrote for the New Zealand Herald on 24 January he claimed:

It is a true saying 'murder will out' and several in connection with the affair having turned King's evidence it has placed the Government in a position to prosecute not only the murderers, but many of their accomplices and has revealed a state of things with regard to Mr Moulton's supporters which will astonish the world. Mr Moulton's bosom friend being prime mover in the case, and Mr Moulton's friends having not only devised the scheme, but laid out the plan which was to have been followed by a civil war in the land.³⁵

The King also believed that the attempted assassination of Baker was part of a Wesleyan plot, and with his connivance a campaign of terror was launched against the remaining Wesleyans. It began with the arrival of the men from Ha'apai and Vava'u who had come to Tongatapu in answer to the King's

35 A copy of the original of this article was sent to Giles and filed in his consular records (F3/2/87, no.108). The version published in the New Zealand Herald on 9 February 1887 was somewhat watered down.

appeal. They began landing on 19 January, and on the following day Giles noted:

I counted twenty vessels drawn up on the beach and more coming out at sea. There are several hundreds of these armed savages now parading about the town and more coming, and I am afraid there will be a disturbance before all is over.³⁶

Balked of their expected sport by the surrender of the outlaws, the northerners vented their aroused passions in acts of violence against the Wesleyans and, to allay suspicion about their own part in the conspiracy, their chiefs, Laifone and Tu'ipelehake, allowed them a free hand. On 20 January one band attempted to break open the gaol and lynch the prisoners, but were ordered off by Tu'uhetoka with a squad of armed constables.³⁷ On the same day another group raided Tupou College and the neighbouring Queen Salote College, and were only prevented from ransacking the buildings by the intervention of Giles, who flew the British flag over the buildings and posted up a notice on the gates declaring that the Wesleyan institutions were under British protection.³⁸

On the same day the plundering began. Armed bands wandered around Hahake destroying the plantations and shooting the fowls and pigs belonging

36 Diary of Pro-Consul Giles, entry for 20 January 1887.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

to Wesleyans.³⁹ On 23 January Moulton appealed to the High Commissioner for protection, declaring:

The country during the last week has been traversed in all directions by armed bands with blackened faces and all the paraphernalia of savagery, who have attacked the residences of the Wesleyans and have endeavoured to make them turn over to the Free Church by presenting their guns and threatening to shoot, by striking them with the butt ends, or in the majority of cases by threatening to shoot their pigs and carry off their property. In many cases these threats have been successful, but a large number have stood firm and have seen their property destroyed before their eyes. Many are absolutely beggared. All the reports have not come in, but I counted this morning twenty towns and villages that have been thus looted.⁴⁰

Of the plundering of Fua'amotu on 25 January Moulton reported that not only had the Wesleyan's pigs and fowls been shot, but all their personal possessions, boxes, clothing and native cloth had been taken, leaving the people with only the clothing they had on.⁴¹ By 27 January looting had begun even in the town of Nuku'alofa,⁴² and two days later had spread to 'Eua.⁴³ On 3 February only the intervention of

39 Moulton to Giles, 20 January 1887, F3/2/87, no.77.

40 Moulton to Mitchell, 23 January 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.73, enc.8.

41 Moulton to Giles, 25 January 1887, F3/2/87, no.90.

42 Moulton to Giles, 27 January 1887, F3/2/87, no.92.

43 Diary of Pro-Consul Giles, entry for 29 January 1887.

Giles, with Tu'uhetoka and a body of armed constables, prevented the sacking of Tupou College, even though it had been put under British protection;⁴⁴ on 5 February both Tupou College and Salote College were disbanded by order of the King and the students and those Wesleyans from outlying villages who were seeking sanctuary there were dispersed to their homes.⁴⁵

The new British Vice-Consul, R. Beckworth Leefe, arrived in Nuku'alofa to relieve Giles, the locum tenens, on 6 February,⁴⁶ but his arrival merely gave added impetus to the persecution campaign; on the following day the floggings began. In his instructions to the new Vice-Consul Thurston, the Acting Consul-General, had warned Leefe that it had been the habit of the English missionaries in Tonga to regard their adherents as being under the special protection of Britain and to expect official intervention from the High Commissioner on their behalf; he had ordered Leefe to discountenance this attitude and to keep 'officially and strictly aloof' from the political and religious disputes of Tonga.⁴⁷ Leefe called on Tupou and Baker on the day he arrived and took the opportunity to assure the King

44 Ibid., 3 February 1887.

45 Ibid., 5 February 1887.

46 Ibid., 6 February 1887.

47 Thurston to Leefe, 31 December 1886, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.73, enc.3.

that 'the British Government had neither wish nor intention of interfering in the internal affairs of his Kingdom'.⁴⁸ He also presented the King with a goodwill letter from Queen Victoria.⁴⁹ Until Leefe's arrival Tupou had evidently been worried that the High Commissioner would intervene to avenge insults offered to Wesleyans and he had made half-hearted efforts to restrain the plunderers, but Leefe's attitude reassured him. He told Leefe:

...he felt glad that the British Government had at last sent a man of years and experience ...to be Consul here; hitherto he had only had boys to deal with, who were constantly interfering and giving trouble, and who wanted to be master instead of him.⁵⁰

Word of the interview circulated rapidly among the chiefs, becoming somewhat garbled in the process; by the next day it was widely believed in Tonga that Tupou had received a letter from Queen Victoria assuring him that he could do whatever he liked with his own subjects. At Leefe's urgent request Baker corrected this report by publishing the full text of the Queen's letter on 14 February,⁵¹ but by then

48 Leefe to Thurston, 7 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.73, enc.6.

49 Queen Victoria to Tupou, 11 October 1886, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.7.

50 Leefe to Thurston, 7 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.73, enc.6.

51 Leefe to Baker, 12 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.4; 'Tongan Government Proclamation', 14 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.7.

the damage had been done.

Within a few days E.W. Parker, Parsons, Bloomfield, Young, Thomas Payne, Phillip Payne, Fisher, Foster and Langdale had all sworn affidavits before Leefe reporting the most brutal flogging of Wesleyans in all parts of the island.⁵² The evidence of Robert Hanslip is not usually very reliable, but in this case his testimony is corroborated by reports from widely separate sources:

It was generally reported on the afternoon or evening of 6 February that Her Majesty's Consul, Beckworth Leefe Esq., who arrived on that day, had brought a letter from Her Majesty Queen Victoria to King George telling him he was at liberty to do as he liked with his own people. The chiefs, I am informed and believe the information to be correct, quoted the letter at the meetings held by them in different parts of Tonga and at which the wholesale flogging of men and women took place. I saw on 16 February a printed translation of a letter from Her Majesty the Queen to King George, the paper was dated on 14 February. A meagre issue of the printed translation had the effect of destroying the excuse given for the flogging and maltreating but not until hundreds of people, men and women, had been flogged, one so severely that he died before the publication of the letter. Semisi Ita is the man I allude to, and he was flogged by Halaholo. From 7 of February to the 12 of February the wholesale beating of Wesleyans continued, and the beating of individuals until 21 February. When the latest case known to me took place.⁵³

52 Copies of these affidavits were sent to the Fiji Times and were published on 23 March 1887.

53 Affidavit of Robert Hanslip, 3 March 1887, F3/2/87, no.248.

One case was brought very forcibly to Leefe's attention when he found, lying under a tree in the Consulate yard, a Tongan Wesleyan minister.

According to Leefe:

...his face, breast, arms and hands were completely covered in blood which was trickling from a wound in the upper half of his face and was making a pool on the grass; his nose was knocked out of shape and he appeared almost stupified.⁵⁴

Another case, reported by E.W. Parker, was that of a nursing mother who had been flogged across her bare breasts until she 'swore by Jesus that the Wesleyan Church was a bloody Church'.⁵⁵ By such methods Wesleyan numbers were decimated: at the time of the assassination attempt there had been three hundred Wesleyans in Tongatapu; by 10 February Moulton estimated that he had only twenty-five adherents left and in desperation he proposed to Leefe that they be allowed to emigrate to Fiji.⁵⁶

The next day, 11 February, Leefe put Moulton's suggestion to Baker, who accepted it with enthusiasm.⁵⁷ Baker was indeed in a very difficult situation. He had sent for the Ha'apai and Vava'u

54 Leefe to Mitchell, 23 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.9.

55 Affidavit of E.W. Parker, 21 February 1887, F3/2/87, no.245.

56 Leefe to Mitchell, 23 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.9.

57 Ibid.

men when he believed that they were required to put down widespread revolt, but when they arrived, painted for war and expecting fighting and rich plunder, the danger had passed. However the fighting spirit of the northern men had been aroused and was not easy to subdue; Baker held a fono on the day after the main body of Ha'apai men arrived and ordered them to be quiet and peaceable,⁵⁸ but his words had no effect whatever. During the following week shots were being fired continuously in Nuku'alofa, making it impossible for Baker's children, still very ill, to get any rest, but his appeals on their behalf were disregarded.⁵⁹ In fact Hanslip reported: 'I noticed that whenever the orders were given to stop firing the discharges were more frequent'.⁶⁰ Baker was also anxious to stop the ravages of the northerners against the Wesleyans, for he knew from past experience that such acts provoked adverse publicity in the world press, but his attempts to stop the violence were fruitless. The reason most probably lay in the attitude of Tupou, who was stubbornly determined to stamp out all opposition to his will and was using the opportunity provided by the disturbances to

58 Evidence of John Hartley Roberts, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10, item 122.

59 Leefe to Mitchell, 7 March 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.31.

60 Affidavit of Robert Hanslip, 3 March 1887.

eliminate the Wesleyans. On one occasion a village policeman received orders from one messenger (evidently Baker's) to protect Wesleyan property from marauders, only to be told shortly afterwards by another messenger (evidently Tupou's) to ignore the orders just received and to allow the Wesleyans to be robbed.⁶¹ Finally Baker wrote officially to Tupou complaining that 'the land does not still listen to me'. He begged the King to put a stop to the plundering and flogging and warned: 'I shall be held responsible for these things and it will end in my being commanded to return to Papalangi'.⁶² This appeal was also disregarded. Appraising the situation shortly afterwards Leefe wrote:

There can be no doubt that just now Mr Baker has a very difficult hand to play and as little that whatever he may have been in the past, he is no longer what he has been so often called, King of Tonga all but in name; the constitution nevertheless, the King has not lost that love of arbitrary power with which he was born and bred and there can be no reasonable doubt that lately he has taken the bit between his teeth, Mr Baker being in consequence, for anything but matters of detail, comparatively powerless.⁶³

Therefore, when Leefe approached Baker with Moulton's request to allow the Wesleyan remnant to emigrate to Fiji, Baker grasped the proposal and

61 Ibid.

62 Baker to Tupou, n.d., F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.21.

63 Leefe to Mitchell, 15 March 1887, F3/19/87, no.18.

persuaded Tupou to agree. At first he insisted that the emigration would only be permitted if Moulton left along with his adherents,⁶⁴ but Moulton refused to accept this condition;⁶⁵ he explained to Leefe, when the latter suggested that his attitude was unchristian and caused suffering among his people, that 'Christ had not come to bring peace on earth but a sword'.⁶⁶ Baker then waived his condition, and ordered all the Tongatapu Wesleyans to gather in Nuku'alofa.⁶⁷ They were embarked on the schooner Malakula, which left Tonga for Fiji on 24 February. The Wesleyans on board numbered a mere thirty-six,⁶⁸ the entire Tongatapu Wesleyan population; when the Vava'u and Ha'apai Wesleyans joined them in Fiji a few days later they brought the number to about ninety men, women and children.⁶⁹ With the departure of

64 Baker to Leefe, 12 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.10.

65 Moulton to Leefe, 18 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.17.

66 Leefe to Mitchell, 7 March 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.31.

67 Baker to Leefe, 18 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.19; Baker to Leefe, 22 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.24.

68 Leefe to Mitchell, 23 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.25.

69 'Report of Sir C. Mitchell, High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, in connection with the Recent Disturbances in and the Affairs of Tonga', 6 May 1887, Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand 1888, vol.I, A-3, p.16.

these last survivors of the Wesleyan persuasion the violence in Tonga ended; on 7 March Leefe reported: 'the most perfect order reigns in Tonga'.

The elimination of the Wesleyans and the restoration of order did not, however, conclude the episode. The High Commissioner had been very dubious about interfering in Tonga, believing that his presence would, as he put it, 'do more harm than good, inasmuch as it would tend to raise expectations in the minds of both parties as to my action that would assuredly not be realised'.⁷⁰ But in London the British Government saw the events in a different light, for a basic change in its attitude towards Tonga had taken place. In April 1886 Britain and Germany had demarcated their spheres of influence in the Western Pacific, and by agreement both parties accepted Tonga and Samoa as a neutral region.⁷¹ Germany, however, was not satisfied with this settlement and, in October 1886, Herr Travers, the Imperial German Commissioner in the Pacific, sought an interview with Thurston, then British Acting High Commissioner, with a view to arranging a modification of the terms agreed upon. Travers, speaking he claimed with the full authority of his Government, urged upon

70 Leefe to Mitchell, 7 March 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.31.

71 'English Text of a Declaration relating to the Demarcation of British and German Spheres of Influence in the Western Pacific Signed at Berlin, April 6, 1886', F.O.C.P. 5310, no.72, enc.

Thurston 'the magnitude of German interests in Samoa, and the claim of Germany to an exclusive or predominating influence in the affairs of the islands, practically amounting to individual control'. He intimated that if Britain would acquiesce in the establishment of a German Protectorate over Samoa, as a quid pro quo Germany would probably agree to Britain having a free hand in Tonga.⁷² Thurston recommended Travers' suggestion to the Secretary of State for the Colonies;⁷³ the proposal was discussed between the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office, and by January 1887 it had been accepted.⁷⁴ On 12 January the British Ambassador in Berlin was instructed to inform the German Foreign Office that Britain was prepared to make concessions over Samoa, and in return hoped that the German Government would 'entertain certain proposals' which the British Government wished to put forward in relation to Tonga.⁷⁵ The subsequent negotiations were protracted, and eventually stalemated, but at the time when the reports of the disturbances in Tonga reached Britain, Tonga was regarded in official circles as an essentially British responsibility. Thus when appeals

72 Thurston to Stanhope, 8 October 1886, F.O.C.P. 5607, no.8, enc.

73 Ibid.

74 Sir J. Pauncefote to Sir R. Herbert, 7 January 1887, F.O.C.P. 5607, no.9.

75 The Earl of Iddesleigh to Sir E. Malet (no.11, Secret), 12 January 1887, F.O.C.P. 5607, no.11.

for British action in Tonga were made by the Aborigines Protection Society⁷⁶ they were given an unusually sympathetic reception. On 10 March telegraphic instructions were sent to Sir Charles Mitchell, the recently arrived High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, ordering him to go to Tonga without delay to carry out a full investigation of the reported disturbances.⁷⁷ Rear-Admiral Tryon, the Flag Officer commanding the squadron on the Australian Naval Station, who had refused an earlier request from the Premier of New Zealand to send a ship to Tonga because of the danger of hurricanes at that time of the year,⁷⁸ also received telegraphed instructions to put a ship at Mitchell's immediate disposal.⁷⁹ With such explicit orders the High Commissioner and the Admiral ceased further hesitation, and on 27 March H.M.S. Diamond, with Sir Charles Mitchell aboard, arrived off Nuku'alofa.

The High Commissioner's visit to Tonga was a humiliating experience for Baker and Tupou. Mitchell formally notified the King of his instructions

76 The Aborigines Protection Society to Sir H. Holland, 4 March 1887, F.O.C.P. 5454, no.230, enc.1.

77 Reported in Mitchell to Holland, 11 March 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.1.

78 Tryon to Mitchell, 12 February 1887, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 72/1887.

79 Reported in Mitchell to Holland, 11 March 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.110, enc.1.

and requested his good offices,⁸⁰ but it was obvious that this was only an empty formality; the real and sufficient sanction for the High Commissioner's actions was H.M.S. Diamond. On 29 March Mitchell subjected Tupou to a rigorous examination, demanding answers to fifty prepared questions, and bringing him back to the point when he tried to be evasive like a headmaster with a delinquent boy.⁸¹ On 30 March he began a formal investigation into a schedule of charges against the Tongan Government prepared by Moulton and including all the alleged instances of persecution of Wesleyans since 1885. Mr Justice Clarke, the Chief Justice of Fiji and Chief Judicial Commissioner of the High Commission, conducted the investigation in the consular court, and except for the King no Tongan dignity was excused; the 166 witnesses called and examined included the Minister of Police, the Premier and the Chief Justice of Tonga.⁸² During a break in the proceedings the charges which Baker had made against Hanslip for his part in the conspiracy were investigated, but even this provided no satisfaction for Baker. Hanslip was acquitted, not through any faith in his

80 Mitchell to Tupou, 27 March 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.3.

81 'Examination of the King of Tonga', 29 March 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.6.

82 'Notes of the Chief Judicial Commissioner', 30 March 1887 to 23 April 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.10.

protestations of innocence, but because all the witnesses against him were under sentence of death, and their evidence could not be accepted.⁸³ The most the Chief Judicial Commissioner could do was to put Hanslip on a bond of £100, with two sureties of £50 each, to be of good behaviour for six months.⁸⁴

Mitchell had come to Tonga with the pre-conception that Baker was the source of all religious trouble in Tonga,⁸⁵ but as a result of his investigation he came to an entirely different conclusion. He reported to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that he was by no means able to concur in the widely held opinion that Tupou was a mere cypher in the hands of his adviser. On the contrary, he believed that this investigation had shown that the King had a very strong will of his own and that, having tried unsuccessfully by other means to convert all his people to the Free Church, he had seized the opportunity which the attack on Baker had presented to declare martial law and set about the forcible conversion of the remaining Wesleyans. Mitchell declared: 'I have not the slightest doubt...that it [the pogrom against the Wesleyans] took its rise from the King's "Kava Ring"

83 Mitchell to Holland, 5 June 1887, F.O.C.P. 5611, no.30, enc.1.

84 'Court Record of Case - Regina v. Hanslip', F.O.C.P. 5611, no.30, enc.2.

85 Mitchell to Holland, 17 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.73, enc.5.

of chiefs and did not emanate from Mr Baker'.⁸⁶ In another confidential report to the Colonial Office Mitchell gave his impressions of Baker. His comments, based on a lengthy and careful investigation, and on personal observation by an astute and relatively unbiassed outsider, form the most valuable contemporary assessment of Baker. He wrote:

Mr Baker is a person of great energy and of undoubted ability. He has a firm hold on the affectionate regard of King Tubou, to whom he has long rendered great and valuable services. But to say, as is commonly said in Tonga and elsewhere that he rules the King, and is, in fact, in his own person the Government of Tonga, is I believe, a great mistake. That much of his influence is due to the intimate knowledge he has of the bent of the King's mind, that much of his success may be owing to his tact and management of Tubou, is, I dare say, true; but I am much mistaken in the opinion which I have formed of the King's force and vigour of character, even at this advanced period of his life, if, having once made up his mind on a point Mr Baker, or anyone else, could move him; and I am also much mistaken if, in such a case, Mr Baker would dare make the attempt. The fact is, as I think, that he stands in considerable awe of the King; but that he has a personal affection for him, and that he serves him, perhaps somewhat blindly, to the best of his power and ability. The European inhabitants of the Tongan Islands, almost without exception, dislike Mr Baker. Some detest him cordially. The reasons for this are not far to seek. In doing, since he became Premier, what he conceived to be best

86 Mitchell to Holland, 2 May 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.1.

for the interests of the King and of Tonga he has, in various ways, interfered with the absolute freedom - I will not say license - enjoyed by the European inhabitants of Tonga. He has imposed customs dues, harbour dues, and various other taxes; he has been more than suspected of bringing his influence and framing his laws so as to favour the Germans; and he has, I understand, held himself very much aloof from his countrymen of the islands, whether as regards to their business or their amusements. By many of the Chiefs also Mr Baker is, for different reasons, regarded with suspicion. Indeed he would have been more than human had he been able to escape the jealousy and apprehensions which his intimacy with the King must have tended to create in the minds of a people so watchful and suspicious as are the Tongans of a higher class. If, to what I have already said of Mr Baker, I add that I think he is very ambitious, and anxious to make a name for himself in the world - if only in the limited world of the South Seas - I think I have said enough to throw light on many of his actions during recent events. Thwarted by his superiors in the Wesleyan Church in his endeavours to extend his political influence, while at the same time holding his Church position, he showed little hesitation in abandoning the latter and as little in consolidating the former. Astute though he is I believe he has been run away with by the course of events. ...The attack on himself, and the grievous injury done to his son and daughter, without doubt affected his judgment at the time they occurred; and when he recovered it, it was too late to change the course of events.⁸⁷

87 Mitchell to Holland, 6 May 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.2: this letter was later published as Report by Sir C. Mitchell in connection with the Recent Disturbances in and the Affairs of Tonga, but in this published version Mitchell's comments on Baker were omitted.

Mitchell decided not to deport Baker. Instead he wrote to Tupou advising him to declare a general amnesty for all connected with the recent disturbances, to issue a proclamation restoring religious liberty, and to repeal the Law of Six and of Thirty. He also suggested that his good offices should be used to seek a reconciliation between the Wesleyan Church and the Free Church. He called the King's attention to the power possessed by the High Commissioner to deport any British subject whom he considered to be prejudicial to the peace and good order of the Western Pacific, and pointed out that the situation would justify the exercise of this power against Baker. However because of the friendship and esteem the King felt for his Premier he was reluctant to take such arbitrary action, and intimated that provided Tupou accepted the advice he had offered he would refrain from exercising the powers vested in his office.⁸⁸ Under the circumstances Tupou could scarcely refuse these terms, and on 26 April he gave a written undertaking to accept the High Commissioner's recommendations.⁸⁹ Mitchell returned to Fiji on 28 April.

After the departure of the High Commissioner Baker and Tupou resumed the business of government

88 Mitchell to Tupou, 25 April 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.7.

89 Tupou to Mitchell, 26 April 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.8.

almost as if nothing had happened. The episode had been humiliating, but they had weathered the storm and their partnership remained intact. They would have been more concerned had they known of the change which had occurred in the policy of the British Government with regard to Tonga, or of the confidential report which Mitchell had sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies advising that the time was ripe for Britain 'to exercise a more direct control...over the destinies of Tonga'. The King, he reported, was nearly ninety years old and could not live much longer, and his successor, Laifone, would concur in any move made by Britain. Therefore, he ventured to suggest, Britain should seek 'an understanding with France and Germany as to the exercise by each of a Protectorate over the Group in which its interests mainly lie', and that this having been achieved, the High Commissioner should be empowered to declare a Protectorate over Tonga as soon as news was received that Tupou had died.⁹⁰ But naturally Baker and the King knew nothing of this.

90 Mitchell to Holland, 2 May 1887, F.O.C.P. 5527, no.300, enc.1.

CHAPTER 12

THE DENOUEMENT

DURING 1887 negotiations continued between Britain and Germany over their respective spheres of influence in the Pacific. Germany had proposed that, as the power with the greatest commercial interest in Samoa, it should undertake the Government of that country as the mandatory for the other treaty powers, and by March 1887 the British Government had decided to agree to this proposal as the only practical solution to the Samoan problem.¹ Accordingly a Bases of Arrangement was signed between the two powers in April 1887 conceding to Germany priority rights in Samoa.² Before this agreement could be made effective it was necessary to win the acceptance of the United States, the other power with treaty rights in Samoa, but with British support Germany was in a strong position and approached with optimism the conference which was to be held between the three powers in Washington in mid-1887.

Meanwhile, in return for the concessions over Samoa, Britain expressed a confident hope that

1 Sir J. Pauncefote to Sir R. Herbert, 7 March 1887, F.O.C.P. 5607, no.25.

2 'Bases of Arrangement approved by the Government of Great Britain and of Germany in Relation to Samoa...April 23, 1887', F.O.C.P. 5607, no.42.

Germany would recognise the priority of British interests in Tonga;³ however, in spite of Herr Travers' earlier offer, the German Government proved unexpectedly unco-operative over this question. On 7 February 1887 Baron Von Plessen called at the British Foreign Office to inform Salisbury that:

...the Tonga Islands were most important to Germany, and that German interests in regard to shipping and the export trade were considerably larger than those of Great Britain: that there was a properly organised Government there which was not the same with Samoa; and that there was no analogy between the two groups.⁴

On these grounds Germany declined to accept the British suggestion. A memorandum was then compiled by Thurston setting out the relative trading and shipping interests of the two powers in Tonga, and claiming that British interests preponderated,⁵ but when this was forwarded to the German Foreign Office it evoked a reply which flatly contradicted the validity of Thurston's statistics and conclusions. The German note offered, however, to defer to the British suggestions concerning Tonga, provided that Britain made yet further concessions with respect

3 The Earl of Iddesleigh to Sir E. Malet, 12 January 1887, F.O.C.P. 5607, no.11.

4 The Marquis of Salisbury to Malet, 7 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5607, no.17.

5 'Memorandum as finally Settled and Communicated to Count Hatzfeldt, March 16 1887', F.O.C.P. 5607, no.23.

to Samoa;⁶ these further concessions were not explicitly stated, but it was clear that Germany was seeking a free hand to abandon the mandatory plan in favour of the outright annexation of Samoa.

At this stage the two powers left the matter to be negotiated at the Washington Conference by their representatives, Count Von Avensleben and Sir John Thurston (who had been awarded a K.C.M.G. in time for the occasion). But at the conference the British and German proposals for the settlement of the Samoan problem were strongly opposed by the representative of the United States, and the conference was adjourned without reaching any decision.⁷ Bismarck's attempt to gain his Samoan objective by diplomatic means was frustrated; he therefore employed more direct methods. In March 1887 several German subjects had been ill-treated by the followers of King Malietoa in Samoa on the occasion of the German Emperor's birthday, and using this insult to national honour as a pretext, Germany declared war on Malietoa in August 1887.⁸ Marines from a German naval squadron

6 'Memorandum communicated by Baron Plessen, April 15, 1887', F.O.C.P. 5607, no.40.

7 Sir J.B. Thurston to the Colonial Office, 13 September 1887, F.O.C.P. 5607, no.55, enc.2.

8 Prince Bismarck to Count Hatzfeldt, 7 August 1887, Confidential Memorandum. Samoa: View of Her Majesty's Government, F.O.C.P. 5735.

occupied Apia, subdued the King's supporters and deposed Malietoa. A rival chief, Tamasese, who was considered to be friendly towards Germany, was proclaimed King of Samoa in Malietoa's place.⁹

Germany's strong measures assured her hegemony in Samoa, and the British were determined to stake a firm claim for compensatory advantages in Tonga.¹⁰ Instructions were therefore telegraphed to Mitchell giving him wide latitude to declare a protectorate over Tonga on the first indication of German interference there,¹¹ and at the same time orders were given for the immediate despatch of a man-of-war to Tonga.¹² H.M.S. Opal was accordingly detached from the Australian squadron and sailed to Tonga at full speed, only just anticipating the arrival of a German warship, H.I.G.M.S. Adler; when the Adler found the Opal already in the area it withdrew immediately.¹³ From September 1887 until January 1888¹⁴ H.M.S. Opal lay off Nuku'alofa,

9 George Herbert Ryden, The Foreign Policy of the United States in Relation to Samoa (New Haven, 1933), pp.371-4.

10 Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 3 December 1887, F.O.C.P. 5611, no.108.

11 Colonial Office to Foreign Office, 14 October 1887, F.O.C.P. 5611, no.76.

12 Admiralty to Foreign Office, 27 September 1887, F.O.C.P. 5611, no.62.

13 The Fiji Times, 5 October 1887, article by 'Our Own Correspondent' dated 22 September.

14 The Opal withdrew on 9 January 1888 to avoid the hurricane season: Foreign Office to Admiralty, 24 January 1888, F.O.C.P. 5783, no.20.

without giving any explanation of its purposes to the Tongan Government. The local Europeans, however, were quick to assume that British annexation of the group was imminent, and in October E.W. Parker wrote to the High Commissioner seeking appointment as an official in the new administration when the takeover occurred.¹⁵ There can be little doubt that it was the threatening presence of H.M.S. Opal which goaded Baker into making his last defiant stand against British encroachment in Tonga.

Until the arrival of the Opal Baker had been trying to fulfil the undertakings which Mitchell had imposed as the condition of his continued residence in Tonga. There were, of course, minor incidents and a certain amount of unseemly recrimination when Wesleyans who had joined the Free Church under duress began to drift back to their older allegiance, but after reviewing all the complaints which he had received from Moulton over the preceding seven months, Mitchell reported to the Colonial Office in November 1887:

Although the Wesleyans still from time to time prefer complaints, for the most part trivial, of their treatment by the Government and by the Free Church people, I see no reason to doubt that Mr. Baker is, so far as in him lies, using his influence with the King to

15 Parker to Mitchell, 18 October 1887, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 268/1887.

make him fulfil the letter, if not entirely the spirit, of the promises made to me in April last.¹⁶

During the same period, moreover, promising moves had been made to bring about a reconciliation between the rival churches. In May 1887 Mitchell had written to the Committee of Privileges of the Wesleyan Church in New South Wales, informing its President that Tupou had requested him to use his good offices to initiate reunion negotiations; he advised that the opportunity should be grasped, as it might be the best offering for many years.¹⁷

The response in Sydney was very guarded, but the Committee decided to appoint three 'commissioners', the Rev. W.G.R. Stephinson, the Rev. George Brown, and a layman, Mr P.P. Fletcher, to visit Tonga and investigate the prospects for reunion.¹⁸ The commission arrived in Tonga in July 1887. Its beginning was most inauspicious, for Tupou clearly remembered that seventeen years earlier, when he had supported Baker in the dispute with Stephinson, the latter had written to the press declaring that Tupou was in his second childhood; so when Stephinson sought an interview

16 Mitchell to Holland, 25 November 1887, F.O.C.P. 5783, no.22, enc.1.

17 Mitchell to the President of the Committee of Privileges of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Sydney, 7 May 1887, M.O.M.C., set 169.

18 Rev. W.G.R. Stephinson to Mitchell, 23 June 1887, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 187/1887.

with him he was brusquely told to put his requests through Baker or Watkin, and not to bother an old man in his dotage.¹⁹ Stephinson left Tonga the next day, on the same vessel which had brought him, but Brown and Fletcher remained and, through their tactful treatment of Baker, they were able to make considerable progress. They held what they described as 'most frank and open' discussions with Baker, Watkin and the King which convinced them that a reconciliation was possible, but only if Moulton were removed; in fact Tupou assured them: 'Let Mr Moulton go, and everything will be all right'.²⁰ Before they left Brown and Fletcher had a private interview with Leefe and told him that 'no doubt remained in their minds of the absolute necessity of withdrawing Messrs. Moulton and Crosby', and that they would recommend this move to the Conference.²¹ It was thus with considerable satisfaction that Mitchell reported to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in September 1887:

There appears...to be some grounds for hoping that the long outstanding religious difficulties

19 A copy of Tupou's letter to Stephinson was sent by Baker to the Auckland Evening Bell and was published on 11 August 1887.

20 Report of Rev. G. Brown and Mr P.P. Fletcher, Commissioners to Tonga, (Melbourne, 1888), p.4.

21 Leefe to Mitchell, 24 August 1887, F3/19/87, no.57.

may at last be amicably settled; and if this is done there will be no need to fear any further trouble, such as has lately occurred, during Tupou's lifetime.²²

During this whole period Baker was subjected to many anxieties. In the first place, his children were still gravely ill from the injuries they had suffered at the time of the assassination attempt. Shirley had lost the use of his arm,²³ and Beatrice was completely paralysed.²⁴ In the second place, Baker went in constant fear of his life, allowing no one but his daughter Alice to prepare his food for fear of poisoning,²⁵ and not venturing out of the palace without an armed guard.²⁶ He was also apprehensive that any outburst among the people would result in the intervention of the High Commissioner and his summary deportation. Despite these difficulties he pursued a sane, moderate and conciliatory policy in Tonga, and when H.M.S. Opal arrived at Nuku'alofa in September 1887 he showed his respect for Britain by illuminating the town in the ship's honour, and arranging entertainments

22 Mitchell to Holland, 1 September 1887, F.O.C.P. 5611, no.89, enc.1.

23 The Fiji Times, 29 June 1887.

24 The Auckland Evening Bell, 17 January 1888.

25 Captain Castle to Rear-Admiral Lord Scott, 17 July 1890, F.O.C.P. 6059, no.45, enc.1.

26 Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, p.10.

for her officers and men.²⁷ When however the weeks and months passed, with the Opal still at anchor and the rumours of British annexation multiplying, Baker became by turn apprehensive, resentful, and finally recklessly defiant. The first sign of his changing attitude appeared in an article which he wrote for the Auckland Evening Bell, a newspaper in which he had an interest, in October 1887:

...some folks think that the Opal is here to watch proceedings, but the Rev. Mr. Baker has nothing to fear, and the closer his actions are watched the more proof will be obtained to prove the great work he has done for Tonga...and the more convincing will be the proof of the wicked culumnies which have been so industriously circulated by his enemies.²⁸

Later the same month Leefe conveyed a warning to Baker from Mitchell (who had in turn been instructed to administer it by the Secretary of State for the Colonies) that, if any further persecution occurred in Tonga which could be traced to his influence, he would be prohibited from remaining in the Western Pacific.²⁹ This warning was a response to Mitchell's report of his investigations in the

27 The Fiji Times, 29 October 1887.

28 The Auckland Evening Bell, 6 October 1887, letter from 'Our Own Correspondent', n.d.

29 Holland to Mitchell, 30 July 1887, F.O.C.P. 5611, no.31, enc.1; Mitchell to Holland, 20 October 1887, F.O.C.P. 5611, no.124, enc.1; Leefe to Mitchell, 27 October 1887, F.O.C.P. 5783, no.33, enc.5.

previous April, and had taken five months to pass through the official channels; by coincidence it reached Baker at this critical time and merely confirmed him in the belief that he was the special target of a British plot seeking his removal and the annexation of Tonga. Almost immediately he began making moves which individually seemed to have little significance, but which collectively demonstrated the new 'hard line' which he was taking towards all things British. Thus in November 1887 the Parker Brothers applied to Baker for an extension of the lease on the sheep run at 'Eua; their request was refused; when their lease expired before they had been able to sell more than a fraction of their flock, they drove the remaining animals over the cliffs into the sea rather than allow them to fall into the Government's hands.³⁰ In February 1888 Baker began pressing Europeans for poll tax, back-dating the claims to January 1881 when the Poll Tax Act was passed, although no demands had previously been made upon Europeans to pay this tax.³¹ In the same month another blow was struck at the traders (the great

30 Parker Brothers to Leefe, 7 December 1887, F3/2/87, no.642; Baker to Leefe, 7 December 1887, F3/2/87, no.656; Leefe to Thurston, 23 April 1888, F3/19/88, no.34.

31 Leefe to H.B.M. Consul-General for the Western Pacific [Thurston], 2 February 1888, F3/12/88, no.12.

majority of whom were British subjects), by requiring them to pay all customs duties, postal fees, wharfage, pilotage and shipping dues in English currency, although they were required to accept the debased Chilean currency from their Tongan customers.³² At the same time Baker began adopting a very peremptory tone in his correspondence with Leefe, the British Vice-Consul. For instance in January 1888 he wrote:

It is simply ridiculous that the Tongan Government and the Tongan chiefs should be put to such annoyance and such expense as they have been and are in consequence of the gross falsehoods which are constantly being made the subject of consular correspondence.³³

The most convincing indication of the new trend in Baker's thinking, and of the lengths which he was prepared to go to discredit Britain was, however, an extraordinary report which he released to the Auckland Evening Bell in January 1888:

Remarkable Disclosures

It will doubtless surprise some of your readers that an Enfield Rifle used by one of the assassins who attempted the life of the Premier has been found in the British Consulate here, and is in the possession of the Tongan Government. It is supposed that some person in connection with the Consulate concealed it there - the rifle has the assassin's name carved on it!³⁴

32 The Tonga Government Gazette, vol.II, no.79, 22 February 1888.

33 Baker to Leefe, 30 January 1888, F3/2/88, no.29.

34 The Auckland Evening Bell, 26 January 1888.

This story was a grotesque distortion of the real facts. After the assassination attempt the Tongan Government had passed an Arms Act requiring all firearms to be registered, and at a dinner party shortly afterwards Leefe had mentioned to Baker that there was an old musket in the consulate which he would be glad if the police would collect. The musket had been brought to Nuku'alofa from Fiji by one of the men who had come from Lau with the reeds to thatch Maudslay's house in 1878, and had lain in the consulate ever since. It could not be fired for it was badly corroded and had parts of the firing mechanism missing. Carved on the stock and barrel-rest were the names of two chiefs of Lau who had previously owned the musket, Raturanga and Ratutuivuna (Ratu being a Fijian title). By a phonetic coincidence the first syllables of each of these names was pronounced Latu in Tongan, because R's are pronounced as L's in the Tongan language. This was the supposed Enfield rifle and the basis of the assertion that the name of the outlaw, Latu, was carved on the stock.³⁵

Had Baker been satisfied to circulate the story only through the Evening Bell little harm

35 Leefe to Thurston, 20 March 1889, F.O.C.P. 5838, no.113, enc.5; 'Notes by Deputy-Commissioner Leefe re Rifle found at British Consulate mentioned in the Blue Book', 19 April 1889, F.O.C.P. 5932, no.89, enc.8.

would have been done, for the Bell had a limited circulation, and the article apparently escaped the notice of the High Commissioner; but in May 1888 he repeated the charges in more elaborate form in a Tonga Government Blue Book.³⁶ The occasion was the General Conference of the Australasian Wesleyan-Methodist Church which met in Melbourne to debate the Tongan question. The New South Wales and Queensland Conference had been held in January 1888, had received the report of Brown and Fletcher, and had heard an address by Sir Charles Mitchell earnestly advocating the reunion of the Tongan Methodists, but had refused to withdraw Moulton.³⁷ As this was tantamount to a rejection of the King's proposal for a settlement, and as the Tongan question was a matter of importance for all Australian Methodists, the handling of the affair by the New South Wales and Queensland Conference was referred to the General Conference. Baker prepared and printed his Blue Book and privately circulated it among the delegates to the Conference. It purported to be a report from the Minister of Police to Tupou outlining the evidence collected by the police against those who had participated in the assassination attempt,

36 T.G.B.B., Report of the Minister of Police in re Attempted Assassination, May 1887.

37 The Fiji Times, 22 February 1888; the Auckland Evening Bell, 26 January 1888.

but in fact, although it was based on the real and much shorter report of Tu'uhetoka of February 1887,³⁸ it was written and composed entirely by Baker, and was only later translated into Tongan and signed by Tu'uhetoka.³⁹ The main object of the Blue Book was to create the impression that Moulton was privy to, and to a large extent responsible for, the plot against the Tongan Premier, but Baker also used the opportunity to vent his grievances against the British by repeating the story of the 'discovery' of the 'Enfield Rifle' with the outlaw's name carved on it, thus implying the complicity of British officials in the assassination attempt.

The Blue Book achieved its immediate purpose, for although Moulton wrote and distributed a pamphlet to the delegates countering the allegations against him⁴⁰ the General Conference decided to remove him from Tonga. The Rev. George Brown was elected to replace him as the Special Commissioner to Tonga of the General Conference with authority and instructions: 'to inquire into and report upon the best means of securing the honourable and lasting union of the

38 Tu'uhetoka to Tupou, 2 February 1887, F.O.C.P. 5838, no.113, enc.6.

39 Sworn statement of Tevita Tui Moala, 14 July 1890, F.O.C.P. 6059, no.67, enc.22.

40 J.G. Moulton, a printed pamphlet headed For Private Circulation and dated 11 May 1888, M.O.M.C. set 169.

two Churches, and generally to draw up a scheme for the permanent settlement of our affairs in Tonga'.⁴¹ This decision meant the final victory for Baker over his opponent of eighteen years standing, but the cost was high. In the first place the new Special Commissioner, George Brown, who was described by a contemporary observer as having 'a sharp rat-terrier look' and being one who was 'evidently of the Church militant and rejoices in fighting',⁴² was a much more formidable opponent than the scholarly and disingenuous Moulton. In the second place the allegations against British officials made in the Blue Book were brought to the notice of the High Commissioner and were largely responsible for bringing about Baker's undoing.

The High Commissioner at this time was Sir John Thurston, who had been appointed to the office on the transfer of Mitchell to Guiana in February 1888. Until August 1888 Thurston was most sympathetic towards Baker for, having himself been adviser to a native King, Cakobau, he knew from personal experience the difficulties inherent in

41 John C. Symons, President of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist General Conference, 'Resolutions on Tongan Affairs', 16 May 1888, T.G.B.B. No.89/1, Tonga Church Troubles.

42 The Vagabond [Julian Thomas], Holy Tonga (Melbourne, n.d.), p.33.

such a position. He adopted a more indulgent attitude to Baker than any of his predecessors, and in his official reports to the Secretary of State for the Colonies of 28 May 1888 and 4 June 1888⁴³ he expressed satisfaction at the state of affairs in Tonga, and blamed Moulton for the minor difficulties which still existed. However, Thurston was a British official and was committed to the extension of British influence in Tonga; he would co-operate with Baker, at least during the lifetime of Tupou, but only as long as Baker did not actively interfere in the gradual process of bringing Tonga within the British sphere. In August 1888 Baker did interfere in this process, and Thurston decided that he would have to go.

It was the coinage question that led to the confrontation. When Thurston received word of Baker's decree of February 1888 requiring all Government dues to be paid in English currency, he wrote to Leefe:

This is an injustice which, so far as British subjects are concerned, cannot be submitted to without active protest. I request that you will inform the Tongan Government that British subjects will be directed to pay their taxes and dues...in such coins as shall be most convenient to them.... If British

43 Thurston to Knutsford, 28 May 1888, F.O.C.P. 5784, no.20, enc.1; Thurston to Knutsford, 28 May 1888, F.O.C.P. 5784, no.20, enc.2; Thurston to Knutsford, 4 June 1888, F.O.C.P. 5784, no.20, enc.3.

subjects are subjected to any loss, or injury in their commercial pursuits or otherwise, owing to their inability to pay Customs or other Dues in English coin the Tongan Government will be called upon to compensate them.⁴⁴

Baker was absent in Auckland at the time, and Leefe was not able to deliver Thurston's message until he returned to Tonga late in July 1888. It was a most inappropriate time to deliver such an ultimatum, for on 1 August Baker exchanged ratifications of the treaty between the United States and Tonga aboard the U.S.S. Adams and was in consequence feeling very confident,⁴⁵ while at the same time he had just heard news from Australia that Moulton was to be removed, which further increased his self-assurance.⁴⁶ Accordingly on 6 August he wrote to Leefe denying the right of British officials to interfere in Tongan affairs and threatening:

Should your Government...uphold the extraordinary position you have taken up in this matter His Majesty intends to appeal to H.I.M. the German Emperor and the

44 Thurston to Leefe, 21 April 1888, F3/10/88, no.15.

45 'Treaty between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Tonga, of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation...Ratified by the King of Tonga, August 1, 1888', F.O.C.P. 5784, no.73, enc.1; the Fiji Times, 6 October 1888.

46 Leefe to Thurston, 8 August 1888, F3/19/88, no.50.

President of the United States to arbitrate for His Majesty in this case and to abide by their decision.⁴⁷

If such a step were taken it would be tantamount to an appeal to Germany and the United States to protect Tonga against British encroachment; an appeal which the United States at least might be willing to entertain. It would thus put a most serious obstacle in the way of Thurston's policy of bringing about the gradual absorption of Tonga into the British orbit. Therefore, when Baker's answer was conveyed to the High Commissioner, his attitude to Baker underwent a sudden change. On 28 August 1888 he wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies listing a number of grievances against Baker, none of which were in any way new, but drawing an entirely new conclusion:

The engagements of the King of Tonga set forth in his letter to Sir Charles Mitchell ...have not been kept, nor do I think they will be so long as Mr. Baker remains in Tonga to direct the course of affairs. To this conclusion I have arrived slowly and with reluctance under a sense of violent and often unwarranted hostility with which Mr. Baker has been pursued by his opponents both clerical and lay. But the condition of things is now changed, and any neglect or refusal on the part of Mr. Baker to do justice to the people and conform to the King's engagements can only be construed in a manner most unfavourable to himself, and

47 Baker to Leefe, 6 August 1888, F3/2/88, no. 240(a).

point to the necessity of his being prohibited under the provisions of the Western Pacific Order in Council⁴⁸ from longer remaining in Tonga.

Thurston intended to go to Tonga at once, evidently to demand Baker's dismissal and to prohibit him from remaining in Tonga, but Admiral Fairfax could not spare him a warship for the purpose,⁴⁹ and before one was available the Secretary of State for the Colonies had stayed his hand. Thurston's report recommending Baker's deportation had been referred to Sir Charles Mitchell for comment, and Mitchell had found no valid reason for altering his earlier opinion on the subject. He wrote:

The banishment of Baker...would lead to no improvement in the state of affairs in Tonga and might, and probably would entail a condition of things that would compel the armed intervention of Her Majesty's Government, a result I should earnestly deprecate leading up to, but which I have sometimes felt would not be unwelcome to the Wesleyan community of New South Wales, or to their supporters at home.⁵⁰

48 Thurston to Lord Knutsford, F.O.C.P. 5784, no.80, enc.1.

49 Admiral Fairfax to Thurston, 21 August 1888, F.O.C.P. 5784, no.80, enc.18; Thurston to Lord Knutsford, 14 September 1888, F.O.C.P. 5784, no.80, enc.17.

50 Mitchell, 'Memo. on Sir J. Thurston's Despatch to Lord Knutsford of August 28, 1888', 3 October 1888, F.O.C.P. 5784, no.18, enc.16.

Consequently Thurston was warned not to deport Baker without prior instructions from London.⁵¹ This warning only temporarily diverted the High Commissioner and he began to seek other, more indirect, means of bringing about Baker's removal. However, Baker was given a respite.

After February 1888 Baker spent most of his time in Auckland, where he had taken his daughter Beatrice for medical attention, and only visited Tonga for a few weeks at a time when urgent business required his attention. He was in Tonga, however, when George Brown arrived as the Special Commissioner of the General Conference in August 1888. At first Brown and Baker got along very well and the ostentatious friendliness which they showed each other noticeably eased the tensions between the rival religious factions.⁵² But in October Brown held his Missionary Meeting for the Wesleyans in Tongatapu and in his speech to his congregation he assured them that his purpose was not to allow the Wesleyans to be absorbed into the Free Church; he declared that the Wesleyan Church in Tonga would last 'e taegata bea taegata' (for ever and ever); he claimed that the division of the Church in Tonga was the work

51 Lord Knutsford to Thurston, 5 January 1889, F.O.C.P. 5838, no.7, enc.2.

52 Baker to Symons, 15 April 1889, T.G.B.B. No. 89/1, Tonga Church Troubles; First Report of the Rev. Geo. Brown, (Sydney, 1888), p.3.

of the devil (which the Wesleyans construed to mean that Baker was the devil); he also let drop the information that the Free Church (which had always taunted the Wesleyans with having to send money to Australia), had sent \$1000 to Papālangi (the white man's land) to assist the work of foreign missions.⁵³ Within days of this meeting Tonga was seething with religious dissension and the fragile detente between Brown and Baker was destroyed. Furthermore, when in December Brown left Tonga for Australia to report his progress to the Standing Committee of the General Conference, he took with him the Rev. Tēvita Tonga and his wife Rachel, who were living with the Wesleyan 'exiles' in Fiji. After presenting his report Brown visited Adelaide and Melbourne to collect funds for the cause in Tonga and the main speakers at the meetings were Tēvita and Rachel. Their testimony was moving. After their South Australian meeting the Adelaide Advertiser commented:

Of this we are sure: should the Rev. George Brown tell the tale in London which he has told in Adelaide and produce as his witnesses Mr. and Mrs. Tonga, such a storm of feeling might speedily be raised as would not only render Mr. Baker's residence in Tonga impossible, but drive him to seek shelter for his dishonoured head in some corner of the planet where his name has never been heard.⁵⁴

53 Baker to Symons, 15 April 1889; First Report of the Rev. Geo. Brown, p.4.

54 The Adelaide Advertiser, 29 March 1889.

After his Victorian meetings the Melbourne Daily Telegraph carried two articles in a similar vein entitled Exiles for Conscience Sake and An Unworthy Englishman.⁵⁵

Baker received copies of these articles in Auckland early in May 1889 and was furious. He wrote to Brown indignantly refuting the assertions made against him and describing Brown's conduct as 'most base, mean and dishonourable'. He concluded his letter with a reference to a raid which Brown had led against natives of New Britain who were threatening his mission station in 1879. At the time Chief Justice Gorrie of Fiji had been determined to put Brown on trial for murder but was overruled by Gordon.⁵⁶ Baker believed that as the price for not indicting Brown, Gordon had demanded his (Baker's) recall from Tonga, and in his letter to Brown he said so:

I should certainly have thought that you, who escaped a felon's cell at Suva because I was made your scape-goat - for it is well known the understanding between the officials of the British Government and Messrs. Chapman and Hurst 'that if I were not sacrificed and recalled you would not escape, but if I were recalled you should be let go free on the

55 The Melbourne Daily Telegraph, 4 April 1889.

56 See the following correspondence in Stanmore, Fiji Records, vol.IV, pp.120-3: Gordon to Gorrie, 10 November 1879; Gorrie to Gordon, 10 November 1879; Gorrie to Gordon, 11 November 1879; Gordon to Gorrie, 11 November 1879.

charge of having murdered the innocent women and children of New Ireland in your murderous raid you made upon them' - would have acted more honourably to an absent friend.⁵⁷

Brown was back in Tonga when he received this letter and, realising that there was no longer any possibility of working with Baker, he made a direct approach to Tupou. On 6 June he wrote to the King proposing that together they should work out the details of a reunion. It was no use trying to work through Baker, he declared:

...he is not seeking the things which will benefit the Lord's work, but his own only. If anything bad has been done in Tonga which is hateful to the world, he shirks it and uses your name saying - 'The King did that'; yet it is well known by everybody that he did it. Any good done he takes the credit for it and says, 'I did it'. I used to love him a great deal...but at the present time I weep for shame at his conduct.⁵⁸

Tupou did not answer Brown's letter until Baker returned to Tonga, and Baker probably drafted the reply. However, there is no reason to suppose that the King did not agree with the vindication of Baker's conduct which it contained:

Who prepared the Constitution and Laws of Tonga but him? Who succeeded in relieving Tonga from the heavy debts which well-nigh swamped us; was it not him? Who has erected

57 Baker to Brown, 11 May 1889, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

58 Brown to Tupou, 6 June 1889, T.G.B.B. No.89/2, Wesleyan Church Affairs.

our buildings and laid out our roads; was it not him? Who set up Tonga to be a Kingdom; was it not him? Who assisted me in giving liberty to Tonga and setting them free; was it not him? Who set up the Courts in Tonga? Fie, your language is that of jealousy. If he boasts, let him do so, for he has accomplished something.⁵⁹

The letter concluded by dismissing out of hand Brown's proposal for direct negotiations with the King:

Now Mr. Brown I did not expect that I should again be thus treated and I have no more to say to you or your Church. It is with Mr. Watkin and the Conference what is to be done; I have nothing more to do with it. I am annoyed.

With this letter the last hope of effecting a reconciliation between the churches was extinguished. Brown therefore turned to the High Commissioner for assistance, and on 11 July 1889 he forwarded to Thurston a copy of Baker's letter alleging collusion between British officials and the Wesleyan hierarchy over the New Britain affair.⁶⁰ This incriminating letter provided another piece of evidence for Thurston to use against Baker. He had already received a copy of the Blue Book. On or about 14 September 1888 Brown had given a copy of this document to Leefe, and Leefe forwarded it to Thurston, together with

59 Tupou to Brown, 27 June 1889, T.G.B.B. No.89/2, Wesleyan Church Affairs.

60 F.O.C.P. 5932, no.89, enc.13.

an explanation of the true facts about the gun in question.⁶¹ In April 1889 Thurston had written to Tupou demanding a full explanation and apology for the publication of what he described as a 'false story...fabricated and circulated in order to injure the good name of England and the reputation of the Queen's officers residing in Tonga', and threatening that unless the allegations were publicly withdrawn he would print and publish the truth of the matter in the Tongan language.⁶² To give his warning more point he sent Leefe a hundred copies of Tupou's letter to Sir Charles Mitchell promising to allow freedom of conscience in Tonga, printed in Tongan, with instructions to Leefe to distribute them to people he thought they might interest.⁶³ Baker was informed of these moves when he visited Tonga in June 1889, and he blustered to Leefe that he was 'not a man to be frightened';⁶⁴ soon afterwards a strong answer was sent to Thurston, signed by Tupou but almost certainly written by Baker, declaring that any injury done to the British name and fame in Tonga

61 Leefe to Thurston, 20 March 1889, F.O.C.P. 5838, no.113, enc.5.

62 Thurston to Tupou, 11 April 1889, F.O.C.P. 5838, no.134, enc.4.

63 J.A. Farewell [Secretary to the High Commission] to Leefe, 8 May 1889, F3/18/89, no.27.

64 Leefe to Thurston, 3 June 1889, F3/12/89, no.39.

was 'solely through the doings of Mr. Symonds, Mr. Moulton and their friend Mr. Hanslip'. The letter concluded: 'How would you like it if I printed and distributed here and amongst my friends in Fiji what is going on in Fiji? I think not!'.⁶⁵

When this letter was received in the High Commissioner's office Collet, the Secretary to the High Commissioner, minuted on the cover: 'I cannot see that any good can come of allowing Mr. Baker to remain longer in Tonga'.⁶⁶ Thurston no doubt agreed, but he had to move with caution, for he had just received a further warning from London not to deport Baker without specific instructions.⁶⁷ He, therefore, merely wrote to Leefe instructing him to seek an interview with Tupou and to inform him privately that while the High Commissioner continued to hold the King in high esteem, he had lost all faith in his Premier, who seemed 'lost to the commonest dictates of honour', and who would be called upon to answer for his iniquities before very long.⁶⁸

65 Tupou to Thurston, 15 July 1889, F.O.C.P. 5932, no.89, enc.6.

66 Memorandum by W. Collet dated 9 August 1889, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 128/1889.

67 Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 4 July 1889, F.O.C.P. 5932, no.3.

68 Thurston to Leefe, 10 September 1889, F3/18/89, no.39.

At this time Baker was facing problems from other quarters. During 1889 the growers' price of copra had dropped from £5.12.0 per ton to £4.9.7 per ton and this, combined with the chaos in the Treasury Department caused by Baker's prolonged absences, had decreased the tax revenue by \$8,000.⁶⁹ With Government debts to traders amounting to \$10,000 and with salaries already in arrears,⁷⁰ Baker had sensed impending disaster and in July 1889 he had sought to resign. Tupou, however, had persuaded him to stay on.⁷¹ He had then sought to appoint a young German named Leinstein, an employee of the German firm in Samoa, to the office of Assistant Premier, with responsibility for the finances, but had been forced to abandon this project when the British residents in Tonga set up a clamour of indignant opposition.⁷² So when it became evident that Thurston was in deadly earnest Baker's ebullient self-confidence began to evaporate and he began trying to make his peace with the High Commissioner. But by this time Thurston had obtained copies of both the offensive Blue Book and the letter to

69 Leefe to Thurston, 3 January 1890, F3/12/90, no.2.

70 Ibid.

71 Brown to Symons, July 1889, Wesleyan Mission Papers, set 12.

72 Thurston to Knutsford, 23 September 1889, F.O.C.P. 5932, no.96, enc.1.

Brown and was ready to move.

In September Baker received a letter from Collet informing him that unless a full and public apology were made for the slanders he had issued against British officials he would face a civil action.⁷³ Baker replied apologising for the statements made in the letter to Brown, declaring that he had had nothing to do with Tu'uhetoka's report and adding: 'it must have been absurd for anyone to suppose Mr. Symonds had anything to do with the gun'.⁷⁴ But in November he was informed that while his apologies were accepted concerning the allegations made in the letter to Brown, nothing less than an unreserved and public withdrawal of all the charges which had been made against Symonds in the Blue Book would satisfy the High Commissioner.⁷⁵ So Baker had printed a five-line supplement to the Blue Book proclaiming that the statement concerning the gun in the original document had been found, on further investigation, to be incorrect.⁷⁶

73 Collet to Baker, 9 September 1889, F.O.C.P. 6041, no.19, enc.2.

74 Baker to Collet, 8 October 1889, F.O.C.P. 6041, no.19, enc.4.

75 Collet to Baker, 13 November 1889, F.O.C.P. 6041, no.19, enc.5.

76 T.G.B.B., Supplement to the Report of the Minister of Police in re the Attempted Assassination, 1 August 1889.

This was forwarded to Thurston in January 1890 while he was visiting Auckland. Thurston however refused to accept it as a sufficient retraction.⁷⁷ When Baker made a personal call on Thurston to explain the matter the High Commissioner refused to see him.⁷⁸ Baker was beaten; the next day he wrote to Thurston abjectly apologising for the Blue Book and withdrawing all the charges and insinuations against British officials contained in it.⁷⁹ Thurston then had all the correspondence on the subject translated into Tongan, and together with a memorandum outlining the true facts about the gun, had it printed as a pamphlet. This pamphlet was circulated in Tonga between March and June 1890,⁸⁰ and destroyed what little prestige Baker retained among the Tongans.

Baker had never enjoyed any great popularity in Tonga, but until the assassination

77 Frank Spence (Assistant Secretary to the High Commissioner) to Baker, 6 January 1890, F.O.C.P. 6041, no.29, enc.2, item 4.

78 Spence to Baker, 7 January 1890, F.O.C.P. 6041, no.29, enc.2, item 5.

79 Baker to Spence, 8 January 1890, F.O.C.P. 6041, no.29, enc.2, item 6.

80 Thurston to Knutsford, 14 June 1890, F.O.C.P. 6059, no.35, enc.1; H.B.M. High Commission, Copies of Correspondence between His Excellency Sir John Thurston...and the Hon. S.W. Baker... with reference to certain Libels printed and published by him in the Australian Colonies and elsewhere [15 March 1890].

attempt of ~~January~~ 1887 the majority of the people had passively accepted his authority. However, the execution of Tōpui and his associates, and the elaborate precautions which Baker took to guard against further attempts on his life had alienated Tongan sympathies, while his prolonged absences in Auckland and the financial problems resulting from the drop in the price of copra had further contributed to a swing of popular opinion against him. By the beginning of 1890 Baker's position had become precarious; the people were openly opposing him by refusing to pay their taxes,⁸¹ thus making it impossible for the Government to pay the salaries of its officials, which in turn further increased Tongan resentment. The publication and distribution of the Thurston-Baker correspondence at this stage was therefore very damaging to Baker, and strengthened a movement of opposition which was already assuming formidable proportions. Even so, Baker still enjoyed the support of the King and might have survived this crisis, as he had many earlier ones, had he been left to deal with the situation without outside intervention; but at this critical juncture Thurston paid his long-promised visit to Tonga.

Thurston arrived on 25 June 1890 aboard H.M.S. Rapid, and spent the first two days in

81 The Fiji Times, 4 January 1890, unsigned letter from Ha'apai dated 25 December 1889.

discussions with Leefe. On 27 June he interviewed the King, taking with him Captain Castle of the Rapid, Collet, and George Moss (the son of Tupou's earliest European adviser and adopted son, Tupou Ha'apai) to act as interpreter.⁸² Baker attended the interview but was allowed to take no part in it; Moss told Moulton's daughter (the widow of Henry Symonds) that 'he sat in a corner of the room, his lips drawn and his face blanched with fear and excitement, completely ignored and not vouchsafing a single utterance'.⁸³ Thurston told Tupou:

I have come down here on important business, and out of consideration for your great age and feebleness I ask you to appoint three chiefs, which I shall choose, as your representatives to deliberate with me on these matters.⁸⁴

The King tried to procrastinate by asking Thurston to submit his request in writing, at the same time giving Moss 'a wink and a look as much as to say "I have scored one now"'. But Thurston ignored the request and terminated the interview. As the British party were leaving Collet acknowledged Baker with the peremptory demand:

82 Thurston to Knutsford, 31 July 1890, F.O.C.P. 6059, no.67, enc.1.

83 Mrs H. Symonds, diary letter to Moulton [25 June to 17 July 1890], Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

84 Ibid.

'You will be on board at two o'clock this afternoon'.⁸⁵

That afternoon Baker visited the Rapid. He was received by no one, a junior officer merely directing him to the High Commissioner's cabin.⁸⁶ During the ensuing interview Baker was asked whether or not he would support Thurston's request for the appointment of a Council of Chiefs.⁸⁷ When he declined and refused to attend the meetings of such a council he was dismissed with the curt command: 'Order your boat and go on shore'.⁸⁸ During the subsequent proceedings Baker was completely ignored.

Thurston invited the chiefs to meet him without waiting for the King's permission, and from 28 June to 5 July he held daily discussions with the chiefs Tungī, Tu'ipelehake, Tuku'aho, 'Ata, Sunia and Kupu.⁸⁹ When he had assured them that his intention was not to annex Tonga and guaranteed them his personal protection against reprisals, they became very co-operative and each made a written affidavit asserting that Baker was solely responsible for all the troubles

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid.

87 Thurston to Knutsford, 31 July 1890, F.O.C.P. 6059, no.67, enc.1.

88 Mrs H. Symonds to Moulton, diary letter.

89 Thurston to Knutsford, 31 July 1890.

of Tonga.⁹⁰ On 5 July Thurston called the chiefs together and told them that, as a result of the information which they had given, he had decided to exercise the powers which he held over British subjects in the Western Pacific whose presence was dangerous to peace and order. He then read to them the Order of Prohibition which he had drawn up against Baker, ordering him to leave Tonga by 17 July (the departure date of the next mail steamer) or face prosecution before the High Commissioner's Court and the liability of a gaol sentence not exceeding two years. He told the chiefs to tell the King of his decision, and then to elect a new Premier from among themselves.⁹¹

The chiefs retired to Tungi's house to discuss the best manner of approaching the King, and then went in a body to the palace. Kupu gave Mrs Symonds a full account of their interview with Tupou:

The King was sitting on the verandah. Kubu and Tuibelehake sat at his back to prevent him if he attempted to resist any of the chiefs by physical force. Tungi and Ata

90 Sworn statement of George Tuku'aho, 2 July 1890; sworn statement of Asabeli Kubu, 2 July 1890; sworn statement of 'Ata, 2 July 1890; sworn statement of George Fatafehi Tuibelihake, 3 July 1890; sworn statement of Tugi, 4 July 1890; sworn statement of Junia Mafileo, 5 July 1890: all from F.O.C.P. 6059, no.67, enc.2.

91 Thurston to Knutsford, 31 July 1890.

sat facing him and Tuibelehake sat between the King and Mr. Baker, who had come out and was sitting on a chair. Tuibelehake began, 'Tupou, your reputation is bad throughout the world; your name stinks; another wrote the letter, your name appeared on it sent to Victoria; the letter was very bad, much is done about which you do not know, etc. etc.' Then Tungi went out and Ata took it up and told the whole thing. Mr. Baker sat there speechless - never uttering a word, and Alice and Shirley sat listening on the other side. The Chiefs told the King that the Governor had done what they asked him and that they must choose another Premier - whereupon the old King said, 'That is alright', then turning to Tuibelehake asked, 'Could you be Premier?' and he said, 'I could'. (I must tell you that they had faufau fono [agreed] before to answer so whoever was asked because the King had always before made the excuse when they wanted him to send Mr. B. away that no-one would undertake his work). He then turned to Tungi and said, 'Could you do it?', to which, of course, Tungi replied, 'Yes, I could'. The King said, 'Please yourselves who it will be but you are not educated, the two young ones they could do the work, but please yourselves'.

The chiefs then adjourned to the Government building on the other side and discussed matters. Suddenly Kubu's attention was attracted by the sight of the Premier's flag floating in the breeze over his office. He got up and without disclosing his purpose made for the flag staff, hauled the flag down, threw it on the ground, stamped on it and said, 'Your rule now ends. You are discredited for bringing Tonga to evil, and never never again shall you stand here!'⁹²

92 Mrs Symonds to Moulton, diary letter: in the original document the speeches of the King and chiefs are rendered in Tongan, but they have here been translated into English.

That night it was formally announced that Baker had been dismissed from office, and that Tuku'aho was the new Premier. Baker left the palace and sought refuge in Watkin's house. On the following morning a guard of marines was landed from the Rapid to prevent Baker returning to the palace, or having any intercourse with the King. He was not permitted even to visit his office to collect private letters and papers. On 15 July it was reported that he had attempted suicide, but had been prevented by Watkin.⁹³

On 17 July Baker boarded the mail steamer, Wainui, before daylight to avoid running the gauntlet which the triumphant Europeans had prepared for him.⁹⁴ During the morning the official order was served on him prohibiting him from returning to Tonga for a period of two years.⁹⁵ That afternoon he was subjected to a final ignominy. Thurston reported in his official despatch to the Colonial Secretary:

On the 17th July I attended, with Captain Castle and a large number of officers and men of Her Majesty's ships present [H.M.S. Egeria was also in the harbour] and nearly the whole of the European inhabitants of Tonga, to receive the thanks of the united population of the island. This gathering,

93 Mrs Symonds to Moulton, diary letter.

94 The Fiji Times, 6 August 1890, 'The High Commissioner at Tonga'.

95 Thurston to Knutsford, 31 July 1890.

called a 'Kawa' was attended by upwards of 4000 people, all of whom in passing me said 'Thanks' or some similar expression of gratitude and laid at my feet some small offering which generally consisted of a fan, a little ornamental basket, or, as in many cases, a few roses. After the people had all passed and re-formed in a semi-circle, the King's Chief Matapule, by command of the King, stood up and addressed me in a speech of eloquent thanks on behalf of the King and the people of Tonga for enabling them, by my presence and some assistance, to free themselves from a British subject who was described as a dangerous and malevolent tyrant.... The whole of this unprecedented and interesting ceremony took place in the presence of a large number of passengers of the steamships Lubeck and Wainui, and was watched by Mr. Baker from the cabin window of the latter vessel.⁹⁶

The festivities were still proceeding when, at 3 p.m., the Wainui got under way for New Zealand, bearing Baker into exile.

96 Ibid.

CHAPTER 13

EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION

WHEN the news of Shirley Baker's fall reached Australia it caused great jubilation among the Wesleyans. A public meeting was held in Sydney to move a vote of thanks to Thurston, whose actions, the meeting declared:

...will long be remembered to his honour, and are in keeping with the traditions of that great Empire of which we are proud to form a part. We are of the opinion that Sir John Thurston has acted with the impartiality demanded by his high and responsible position, and that throughout the progress of events which culminated in the departure of Mr Baker from Tonga and in the reorganisation of the Tongan Government, his advice and action exhibited all the prudence, considerateness, and strength which should characterise the counsels and conduct of a servant of Her Majesty's Government.¹

Editorial opinion in Australia and New Zealand was of the same mind, for Thurston had made sure that his version of events in Tonga in June and July 1890 reached the press before Baker's.² Only the New Zealand Herald and the Auckland Evening Star expressed

1 'Resolution passed at a Public Meeting of the Citizens of Sydney, held under the Auspices of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New South Wales, in the Centenary Hall, Sydney, August 6, 1890', F.O.C.P. 6059, no.49, enc.2.

2 Mrs Symonds to Moulton, diary letter dated 25 June to 14 July 1890, Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa.

doubts whether the deportation of Baker, which they feared would lead to the collapse of Tongan independence, was in the best interests of the Tongan people, but as these papers were known to have profited from the printing of Tongan Government documents for Baker, their opinions carried little weight.³ The general approval of Thurston's actions expressed in the Colonies had its effect in London and, as Thurston had anticipated,⁴ the British Government overlooked his disobedience of orders and approved his conduct.⁵

In Tonga, however, the elation and high glee which was generally felt over the fall of the Ta'emangoi soon faded. Thurston had promised Tuku'aho to send a British officer to Tonga to be the tangata fakahinohino, or expounder of civilised ways,⁶ and Basil Thomson, Thurston's chosen vessel, sailed to Tonga with the returning Wesleyan exiles in August 1890.⁷ By the time he arrived a reaction

3 N.R. Fitzgerald, New Zealand Public Opinion and The Attempted Assassination of the Rev. S.W. Baker and his eventual Removal from Tonga, A Study of New Zealand Opinion 1887 to 1890 (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Otago, 1962), pp.33-9.

4 Mrs Symonds to Moulton, diary letter.

5 Knutsford to Thurston, 17 November 1890, F.O.C.P. 6059, no.81, enc.1.

6 Tuku'aho to Thurston, 17 July 1890, F.O.C.P. 6059, no.69, enc.2; Thurston to Knutsford, 1 August 1890, F.O.C.P. 6059, no.69, enc.1.

7 Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, p.28.

had set in: the King had moved to Ha'apai as a gesture of rebuke to his self-appointed Government; the traders had extracted ruinous concessions from the fledgling administration; Tongan confidence in the new régime was rapidly dissipating; and Tungī and Tuku'aho, who held the most important portfolios in the new cabinet, were threatening to resign.⁸

Thomson was made Deputy-Premier and under his firm guidance the Government was rehabilitated, the avarice of the traders curbed, the finances stabilised and public confidence restored. Tupou even returned to Nuku'alofa. But while in theory the independence and sovereignty of Tonga were scrupulously maintained, in practice the Tongan Government came to rely heavily on the support and advice of the High Commissioner: when Thomson left Tonga in August 1891 he reported in a confidential memorandum to the Colonial Office that British influence in Tonga had become completely predominant.⁹

Tupou died in February 1893 of a chill caught after an early morning bathe in the sea.¹⁰ He was succeeded by his great grandson, Tāufa'āhau, the son of Tu'ipelehake and 'Unga's daughter, Fusipala. The accession of Tupou II marked a setback

8 Ibid., pp.31-3, 39-40.

9 Thomson, 'Memorandum on Tongan Affairs', 24 August 1891, W.P.H.C. Inwards Corresp. (General), 276/1891.

10 Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, p.285; Savage Island, p.158.

for British policy in Tonga, for it had been confidently expected in Fiji that Tuku'aho, who was markedly pro-British, would succeed.¹¹ The young King, on the other hand, was determined to assert his independence. When Leefe wrote to him soon after his accession explaining why he should appoint no Europeans other than British subjects to Government positions, he was informed that the King would appoint whoever he liked.¹² Tuku'aho, who had administered Baker's quarantine regulations with such laxity that a measles epidemic had entered the Kingdom, carrying off one in twenty of the population, was dismissed from office.¹³ A new cabinet was appointed made up largely of Baker's old supporters.¹⁴ But the setback was only temporary. In 1899 Britain, Germany and the United States finally came to an agreement over their respective positions in Samoa; Samoa was divided into two spheres of influence dominated respectively by Germany and the United States; in return for surrendering her treaty rights in Samoa the other Powers

11 Thomson, 'Memorandum on Tongan Affairs', 24 August 1891.

12 Leefe to Thurston, 4 December 1893, F.O.C.P. 6493, no.54, enc.2.

13 Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, p.286.

14 Thurston to the Marquis of Ripon, 16 January 1894, F.O.C.P. 6493, no.54, enc.1.

surrendered to Britain their treaty rights in Tonga.¹⁵ The natural consequences of this deal followed soon afterwards. In March 1900 Germany formally annexed Western Samoa; at the same time the United States assumed sovereignty over Pago Pago; and in March 1900 H.M.S. Porpoise arrived at Nuku'alofa to negotiate a treaty defining a new relationship between Britain and Tonga. The British plenipotentiary was Basil Thomson.

Thomson spent six weeks in Tonga trying to persuade the reluctant King to accept British protection, and only succeeded by threatening to depose him if he refused.¹⁶ The treaty was signed on 18 May 1900, and at ten the next morning Thomson proclaimed Tonga a British Protectorate at a fono on the mala'e. He described the scene in his own words:

The entire population, white and brown, were assembled on the beach, and I heard afterwards that the Tongans were saying, 'There they go, beaten; they fought our chiefs for our country and got the worst of it.' ...I read the English version announcing that the country was a British Protectorate. The natives made no sign, but when I read the proclamation in Tongan and came to the words 'buleanga malui' (protectorate) there was a kind of sob.¹⁷

15 Guy H. Scholefield, The Pacific its Past and Future (London, 1919), p.324, 'The Samoa Convention 14 November 1899'; ibid., p.325, 'The Samoa Tripartite Convention signed at Washington, 2 December 1899'.

16 Thomson, The Scene Changes, p.213.

17 Ibid., p.223.

Thomson later admitted that at the time the whole affair made him feel 'rather cheap',¹⁸ but the knighthood he received for his part in it no doubt restored his self-esteem.

Ironically it was Shirley Baker who translated the Treaty of Protection into Tongan for Tupou II.¹⁹ After his deportation Baker had tried unsuccessfully to find powerful supporters to demand his reinstatement, and had visited America in the hope of persuading the United States Government to invoke its treaty rights in Tonga and intervene on his behalf.²⁰ But in November 1890 Thomson had published a report on the finances of Tonga which drew attention to the irregularities in the Treasury Department during Baker's later administration and revealed numerous minor peculations of public funds which Baker had committed, including charging his groceries and liquor to the public account and allowing the Tongan taxpayers to meet his subscription to the Auckland Club.²¹ These disclosures had tarnished Baker's reputation and his interviews with the U.S. senators proved fruitless.²²

18 Ibid., p.206.

19 Baker, Memoirs, p.34.

20 Thurston to Knutsford, 16 February 1891, F.O.C.P. 6170, no.41, enc.1; the Fiji Times, 14 February 1891.

21 Basil H. Thomson, Auditor, Report, November 1890, M.O.M.C., 'Tonga, Official Publications'.

22 Baker, Memoirs, p.32.

He had then settled down in Auckland, where he owned a large house in a select part of the town and where, according to popular rumour, he had extensive investments.²³ Thomas Trood, who visited him at this time, claimed that he was a director of the Bank of New Zealand,²⁴ but the official history of the Bank does not support the assertion.²⁵ However, Baker apparently had ample means, which he supplemented by writing school books for the Tongan Government schools and by acting as commission-agent for the Free Church.²⁶ His status was considerably enhanced in 1895 when he announced to the Auckland press that the University of Chicago had recognised his services to education, law and government in Tonga by awarding him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.²⁷ However, when Moulton's son-in-law, A.W. Mackay, wrote to the University authorities enquiring about this claim, he was informed that they had no record of making such an

23 E.g., Memorandum by Sir Charles Mitchell, 28 August 1888, F.O.C.P. 5784, no.80, enc.16.

24 Trood, Island Reminiscences, p.73.

25 N.M. Chappell, New Zealand Bankers' Hundred, A History of the Bank of New Zealand 1861-1961 (Wellington, 1961).

26 Baker, Memoirs, p.33; the Sydney Evening News, 'Tongan News', 21 October 1897.

27 A.W. Mackay, Account of the Sojourn in Tonga of Shirley Waldemar Baker and the Consequences of his Tyranny (Sydney, 1897), p.2.

award.²⁸

Baker lost heavily during the severe economic depression which overtook New Zealand in the mid-nineties and he was reduced to comparative penury.²⁹ Consequently, in February 1897, a short time after the death of Sir John Thurston was announced, he went back to Tonga to seek appointment as Government Medical Officer. Through the intervention of the British Vice-Consul his application was refused, and he returned to New Zealand.³⁰ But in October 1897 he came back to Tonga to apply to the Free Church Conference, then meeting, for appointment as a minister of the Free Church, but this application was also rejected.³¹ At this time his wife died in Ha'apai of peritonitis.³²

In May 1898 Baker moved permanently from New Zealand to Ha'apai, where he had built a small house. His three unmarried daughters, who had returned to Tonga with him, opened a school, and their father supplemented the family income by

28 Ibid., p.3; a similar inquiry by the writer to the Assistant Registrar of the University of Chicago in October 1964 elicited the same response.

29 Trood, Island Reminiscences, p.73.

30 The Fiji Times, 16 March 1897, 'Tonga'; Leefe to Consul General for the Western Pacific, 9 December 1897, F3/12/97, no.42 (a).

31 The Fiji Times, 6 December 1899, letter from 'Our Own Correspondent' dated 21 November 1899.

32 The New Zealand Herald, 11 December 1897.

dispensing medicines.³³ In August he attended the Annual Conference of the Free Church in Vava'u to demand back-payment of his supernumerary allowance of \$500 per annum, with interest at 10 per cent, from the time of his dismissal from Tonga. When Watkin and the Conference declined to meet this charge Baker left Vava'u, threatening to start a Church of England mission in Ha'apai.³⁴ He was as good as his word, and on 17 September he inaugurated the Siasi a Vikia (Queen Victoria's Church) in Ha'apai, and soon gained a following of upwards of 200 people.³⁵ In November he carried the mission to Tongatapu, where a political dispute had prepared the way for a division in the Free Church. Tupou II had been affianced from childhood to Ofa, a near relative of Tungī, and it was probably owing to this prospective alliance of the two families that Tungī had not opposed the succession of Tāufa'āhau to the throne. However in 1899 the King had renounced Ofa and married Lavinia, the daughter of Kupu. Tungī and his lineage were incensed at this insult and began burning the houses of Lavinia's supporters.³⁶ Thus, when Baker announced the founding of the Siasi a Vikia in Nuku'alofa, Tungī and his

33 The Fiji Times, 6 December 1899.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

family joined en masse.³⁷

Baker's success was short lived. The King, fearing that Baker was becoming a focus of opposition against his Government, made enquiries of the Rt Rev. Alfred Willis, Bishop of Honolulu, concerning the validity of Baker's holy orders and, when he was informed that Baker had no right to wear a surplice, he publicly denounced him.³⁸ Baker thereupon hastened to regularise his position by obtaining a lay reader's licence from the Bishop of Dunedin, who had long been his supporter;³⁹ but it was too late. His disillusioned congregation deserted him and sought the assistance of the Bishop of Honolulu. Willis, who had been left without a living when the Church of England in Hawaii was handed over to the American Protestant Episcopal Church, agreed to come to Tonga to superintend the infant congregation.⁴⁰

After this reverse Baker sank rapidly into decrepitude. In May 1900 Basil Thomson, in Nuku'alofa to negotiate the new treaty, held an 'at home' at the British Consulate for the local Europeans; he

37 Ibid.

38 Tupou II to Sir George O'Brien, Governor of Fiji, 18 December 1899, F3/10/1900, no.1, enc.1.

39 'Licence issued to S.W. Baker by Samuel Tarrat Nevill, 13 September 1900', included in pamphlet Episcopal Superintendence of the Eastern Pacific, Archives of the Diocese of Polynesia, Suva.

40 Alfred Willis to the Chiefess Ofa, 26 February 1900, F3/43, no.43.

recorded:

...while I was talking to two new arrivals an elderly and rather feeble little gentleman in black entered the room, and my two visitors hastily seized their hats and took their leave before I had had time to exchange a word with them. The features of my new visitor seemed familiar, but the suspicion that crossed my mind while he was talking affably of the weather and the earthquake and other general topics died away as I noticed how decrepit and broken he seemed. Suddenly through the open window I saw a party of new arrivals stop short, hesitate for a moment, and then turn tail, and knowing that there was but one man in all Tonga who could produce this effect, I recognised my visitor. It was Mr. Shirley Waldemar Baker himself. He was greatly changed from the masterful and prosperous minister of King George, whose name had been a byword throughout the Pacific and Australasia. His gains were all gone; years of hard living had played havoc with his health and prematurely aged him; he seemed even to have lost the self-confidence behind which he had concealed his lack of education. And yet even in this broken state he was able to make himself feared.⁴¹

Soon after the failure of his plan to establish himself as the head of the Church of England in Tonga Baker returned to Ha'apai, where his congregation remained faithful. Here a blow was delivered from within his own family. His daughter Laura, who was beginning to lose the bloom of youth with no marriage prospects in sight, succumbed to the blandishments of a young Tongan and bore him an illegitimate son. Baker expelled

41 Thomson, Savage Island, pp.180, 181.

his daughter from the family to make her own future in New Zealand, and handed the child, Fetu'u, to the father's parents to be reared as a Tongan.⁴² Shortly after this, on 16 November 1903, Baker died of a heart attack.⁴³ According to the local tradition he was found dead with his tongue protruding, by which the Tongans knew that the devil had got him at the end.⁴⁴ He suffered one last humiliation. His daughters applied successively to the local representatives of the Church of England, the Free Church, the Wesleyan Church, and in desperation the Catholic Church, but no one would bury him. He was finally laid to rest in the cemetery at Lifuka, Ha'apai, by an itinerant Seventh-day Adventist preacher who happened to call at Ha'apai in search of converts.⁴⁵ But the King at least had sufficient sense of propriety to fly the Tongan flag at half-mast on the day of the funeral.⁴⁶

42 Told to the writer by the children of Fetu'u, as well as by Tautua'a, Laura's lover, now over eighty years old.

43 The Fiji Times, 2 December 1903.

44 Told to the writer at a faikava in Ha'apai in 1963.

45 Told to the writer by the 'Eiki Ve'ehala.

46 Baker, Memoirs, p.48.

THE judgement of history had been passed on Shirley Baker some time before his death. In 1897 Basil Thomson published The Diversions of a Prime Minister, a devastating satire on Baker's Tonga which was written so wittily and in such elegant prose that it was widely read and accepted as the 'authorised version' on the events of the period. This work set the tone for everything that has since been written about Tonga under Baker's administration, and indeed so far pre-empted the field that no further or fuller investigation has, until now, been attempted. This essay is an attempt to fill the gap by tracing, in sequence and in context, the events and developments of the period, and thus to provide the basis for a re-evaluation.

From the evidence adduced it would seem that the accepted estimate of Baker's character is inadequate. According to Thomson Baker was a remarkably unpleasant person - ignorant, pompous, bigoted and venal. This, as far as it goes, is probably true, for Baker did have rather more than his share of unsavoury characteristics. However he also had a number of more estimable traits which Thomson failed to mention. Some of these were noted by Thomas Trood, a British resident in Tonga with no particular axe to grind, who wrote of Baker:

However bitter might be the attacks of his enemies, he ever, in times of their sickness or that of their families, gave his medical

advice, always most valuable, freely and did his best for the sick persons; nothing true, in my knowlege can be urged against his moral character. He was also, without being a total abstainer, strictly temperate. Neither was he revengeful; no man can attack him justly on that score. ...He was also a very kind hearted man, much more so than some of his opponents. ...He was a worker in the hive of men, and no drone, rising long before daylight and continuing work in his study till eight or nine o'clock. Probably if judged by the rule of 'charity' he may in the unseen world find a better record than that which men have assigned to him here. ...'The greatest of all virtues is charity', and that Baker, with all his faults, possessed to a greater extent than his enemies.⁴⁷

The final judgement on the matter must be left to the recording angel, but it seems clear that Baker was neither so deficient in virtues nor so replete with vices as is commonly alleged. Like other men he was a complex mixture: neither black nor white, but dappled.

It is equally difficult to make an unequivocal assessment of Baker's work as a missionary. On the one hand he made the Tongan mission self-supporting and brought solvency to the Australasian Wesleyan Missionary Society; on the other hand his methods of achieving this worthy objective caused a scandal that still embarrasses the Methodist Church and provides ammunition for its critics. Again, Baker gave Tonga its own

47 Trood, Island Reminiscences, p.74.

self-governing Church, but in doing so he provoked bitter internal conflicts and brutal religious persecution. But perhaps, in the long view, Baker has been vindicated. Today Tongans are among the most devout people on earth, a state of affairs for which the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga is largely responsible. Liberated from outside control, and closely in touch with the needs of the people, the Free Church has kept the loyalty of the Tongans as no fakaongo (dependent) Church could do, and the Tongans have shown no desire to follow John Thrum or seek the Cargo.

But, in the final analysis, it is as a statesman and politician that Baker must be judged, and it is in the verdict of Thomson and later writers on this question that the greatest miscarriage of justice lies. Baker wrought a revolution of tremendous significance in Tonga. Under his guidance a tribal, semi-feudal society was transformed into a modern constitutional state; government by the whim of the powerful was replaced by the rule of law; and from dependence on subsistence agriculture the country was enabled to progress to a money economy based on trade. At the same time the Kingdom's independence was maintained against powerful adversaries and the alienation of native lands effectively and permanently prevented. Changes as profound as these have seldom occurred in other societies within so short a space of time, and when they have taken place they have usually

been accomplished by violence, as in the French and Russian revolutions, or accompanied by widespread distress, as in Japan during the Meiji period and Britain during the Industrial Revolution. But in Tonga a combined social, economic and political revolution was accomplished swiftly and smoothly, with a minimum of distress and with the loss of only six lives, those of Baker's would-be assassins.

The magnitude of this achievement has been obscured by the writings of one man, at least for Europeans. Polynesians know better - in 1946 New Zealand granted independence to Western Samoa and on this important occasion the new Samoan Head of State, Tamasese, paid the New Zealand Premier the highest compliment he could think of: he compared him to the Rev. Shirley Baker.⁴⁸

48 J.W. Davidson, Survey of the Government of Western Samoa, Confidential Survey at the Request of the New Zealand External Affairs Department, n.d., p.6, typescript in the possession of the author: report on speech of Tamasese at the Fono of All Samoa, November 1946.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following is a bibliography limited to those sources which have actually been cited in the text. This study is, however, clearly indebted to a number of other sources which have provided the writer with background information, and which have influenced his ideas. Several bibliographies of Pacific historical and anthropological material are available, and the reader should have recourse to them in the event of his wishing to pursue the more general aspects of this study in detail.

PACIFIC BIBLIOGRAPHIES LISTING MATERIAL RELEVANT TO TONGA AND
THE PACIFIC IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Leeson, I., A Bibliography of Bibliographies of The South Pacific, O.U.P., 1954.

Lewin, E., The Pacific Region: a Bibliography of the Pacific and East Indian Islands, exclusive of Japan, Royal Empire Society, London, 1944.

Petherick, E.A., A Bibliography of the Pacific Islands, a manuscript bibliography in the Australian National Library, Canberra.

Taylor, C.R.H., A Pacific Bibliography. Printed Matter relating to the Native Peoples of Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia, The Polynesian Society, Wellington, 1951.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOURCES CITED

A) ARCHIVAL SOURCES

1. Tonga (a) Collection of the Rev. S. Latūkefu.Constitution of Tonga 1875. (Original document)(b) Archives of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nukualofa.Friendly Islands District Meeting Minute Book. Koe Fanoganogo Fakabulega 21 May 1887. (Phamplet).Moulton, J.E. Ki He Jiaji Uesiliana o Tonga. 31 March 1885. (Phamplet).

Symonds, Mrs H. Diary Letter to Rev. W. Moulton, 25 June - 17 July 1890.

Baker, Rev. S.W. to Rev. G. Brown. Letter dated 11 May 1889.

2. New Zealand (a) House of Representatives, Wellington.Printed Appendix to the Journals of the House Representatives, New Zealand

1874, vol.I, A-3 ("Papers Relating to the South Sea Islands").

1885, vol.I, A-9 ("German Interests in the South Seas. A Collection of Documents presented to the German Reichstag in December 1884").

1888, vol.I, A-3 ("Report of Sir C. Mitchell, High Commissioner for the Western Pacific in Connection with the Recent Disturbances in, and the Affairs of Tonga, 6 May 1887").

(b) Hocken Library, DunedinBrown, Rev. George First Report. Sydney, 1888. (Pamphlet).Report of Rev. G. Brown and Mr. P. Fletcher Commissioners to Tonga. Melbourne, 1888.(c) Alexander Turnbull Library, WellingtonLetters and Correspondence in re Tongan Affairs and the Request of H.M. King George for Tonga

to be made an Independent District. Sydney, 1879. (Pamphlet).

MSS and Printed Coduments in Connection with the Charges against Rev. S.W. Baker, Tonga 1866 and Onwards. (A collection).

Resumé of an Enquiry in re Tongan Mission Affairs, October 1879. Auckland, 1879. (A pamphlet).

Wesleyan Mission Papers, a manuscript collection.

The following files: set 6, set 8, set 9, set 10, set 12, set 13, set 14, set 15, set 16.

3. Fiji (a) Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission

Copies of Dispatches from the Consul-General and/or High Commissioner for the Western Pacific to the Consul, Vice-Consul and/or Deputy Commissioner, Tonga, and from the Consul, Vice-Consul and/or Deputy Commissioner, Tonga to the Consul General and/or High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, 1860-1953.

(Preliminary Index No.3). the following series:

F3/2. General Correspondence - Inwards, 1878-1944.

F3/10. Despatches from the Consul-General to the Vice-Consul, Tonga. 1879; 1881 to 1882; 1884 to 1900; October 1913 to December 1935.

F3/12. Copies of Despatches from the Vice-Consul, Tonga, to the Consul, Fiji, or Consul General. March 1864 - December 1864, November 1879 - February 1901.

F3/18. Despatches from the High Commissioner to the Deputy Commissioner or Agent, Tonga. 1879-1937.

F3/19. Copies of Despatches from the Deputy Commissioner, or Agent, Tonga, to the High Commissioner. 1879-1953.

F3/43. Miscellaneous Papers.

F. Separate. A despatch from Consul T. Pritchard

to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs dated 15 May 1862.

Miscellaneous Papers of Fiji Tongan Relations 1862-1869. Folder (g).

Western Pacific High Commission [W.P.H.C.]

Inwards Correspondence (General). (A Collection of despatches). The following files: 1877, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1887, 1889, 1891.

Report of the Committee appointed by the Wesleyan Conference to consider Tongan Affairs. February 1884. Privately circulated pamphlet, a copy in Inwards Correspondence (General), file for 1884.

H.M.S. Espiegel visit to Samoa and Tonga, No. 1, May-August 1884, Capt. Bridge R.N. Admiralty Paper in W.P.H.C. Inwards Correspondence (General), file for 1884.

(b) Collection of His Honour Judge Hammet, Puisne Judge of Fiji.

Koe Boobooi vol.II, no.1, March 1875 to vol. III, no.2, September 1881. Originals in the private collection of Mr Justice Hammet, Puisne Judge of Fiji.

(c) Archives of the Diocese of Polynesia.

Episcopal Superintendence of the Eastern Pacific. A pamphlet in the Archives of the Diocese of Polynesia, Suva.

4. Hawaii (a) Archives of Hawaii, Honolulu.

Foreign Office and External Papers of the Government of Hawaii.

5. Sydney (a) Mitchell Library.

Papers of Rev. E.E.V. Collacott. Minutes of Local Preachers Meetings for the Haabai Circuit 1861-1874.

Mackay, A.W. Account of the Sojourn in Tonga of S.W. Baker and the Consequences of his Tyranny. Sydney, 1897. (Pamphlet). The Methodist Overseas Mission Collection. (A manuscript collection).

The following files:

Sets 33, 34, 35, 166, 169, 170.

Set iv, item 99.

Set iv, item 101.

Uncatalogued MSS, set 197, item 2.

Uncatalogued MSS, set 207.

Niu Vakai, No.1, October 1881 to No.5,

February 1882. Originals in the Methodist Overseas Mission Collection.

Report of a Deputation Appointed by the General Conference of 1884 to visit the Friendly Islands. Sydney, n.d. A pamphlet in the Methodist Overseas Mission Collection.

(b) Dixon Library.

Langham, Rev. F. Letter Book.

6. Melbourne. State Library of Victoria, Archives.

Shipping Records.

Victorian Denominational School Board

Statistics, 'Abstract of Teachers Returns for year ending 31 Dec. 1885'; 'No.59/1469'.

7. Great Britain London (a) Foreign Office.

British Foreign Office Confidential Prints (Printed copies of documents).

No.4285, 'Correspondence Relating to Tongan Affairs 1876-1880'.

No.5150, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, April to June 1885'.

No.5159, Part V 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, July to September 1885'.

No.5199, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, October to December 1885'.

No.5310, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, April to June 1886'.

No.5350, 'Further Correspondence Respecting Affairs in the Navigator's Islands 1881-1884'.

No.5341, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, July to September 1886'.

No.5421, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, October to December 1886'.

No.5454, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, January to March 1887'.

- No.5527, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, April to June 1887'.
 No.5607, 'Secret Correspondence Respecting Samoa and Tonga, 1886-1887'.
 No.5611, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands'.
 No.5735, 'Confidential Memorandum, Samoa: View of Her Majesty's Government'.
 No.5783, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, January to June 1888'.
 No.5784, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, July to December 1888'.
 No.5838, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, January to June 1889'.
 No.5932, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, July to December 1889'.
 No.6041, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, January to June 1890'.
 No.6059, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, July to December 1890'.
 No.6170, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, 1891'.
 No.6493, 'Further Correspondence Respecting the Pacific Islands, January to June 1894'.

British Foreign Office Records Relating to the Pacific Islands, 1822-1905 (F.O./58). Volume Nos.150, 169, 172, 176, 177, 182, 185, 188. (Microfilm in Australian National Library, Canberra).

(b) Public Records Office.

Public Records Office. LC/3/22 'Lord Chamberlain's Department, Physicians and Surgeons List 1846-1868'.

(c) Methodist Missionary Society, Records.

Calvert, Rev. James, Journal in Personal Papers Collection (Microfilm).

Thomas, Rev. John, Journal in Personal Papers Collection (Microfilm).

B) PUBLISHED REPORTS

Report of the Australasian Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society and Account of Contributions Received.
 Sydney, Issues between 1860 and 1878.

Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.
 London, 1840.

C) BLUE BOOKS, GAZETTES AND WHITE BOOKS

Tongan Government Blue Book: Containing a list of charges brought by the Premier of Tonga (Rev. S.W. Baker), on behalf of the Tongan Govt. against the Rev. J.E. Moulton, Wesleyan Missionary, together with the reply of the Rev. J.E. Moulton, as made before the District Meeting of the Wesleyan Church, at Lifuka, Ha'apai, Oct. 24 1883, and the Replication of the Rev. S.W. Baker to the same. 7 November 1883.

Tongan Government Blue Book: Containing Documents Read Before and Presented by the Premier of Tonga (Rev. S.W. Baker) on Behalf of the Tongan Government, to the Conference Committee on Tongan Affairs, Together with the Reply of the Rev. S.W. Baker to the said Committee. n.d.

Tongan Government Blue Book: Correspondence between the Tongan Government and the British Government; in re the action of H.F. Symonds, Esq., H.B.M. Vice-Consul, Tonga, and of the Captain of H.M.S. 'Espiegle'. n.d.

Tongan Government Blue Book in Re Eua Sheep. n.d.

Tongan Government Blue Book in Re Tonga Wesleyan Mission Affairs. n.d.

Tongan Government Blue Book in Re Wesleyan Secession, Containing correspondence between the Tonga Government and H.B.M. Pro-Consul, Dr. A.G. Buckland. Correspondence between the Tonga Government and the Revs. J.E. Moulton and E.E. Crosby B.A. and the translations of circulars issued by the Rev. J.E. Moulton and the Tonga Government. n.d.

Tongan Government Blue Book No.89/1: Tonga Church Troubles, n.d.

Tongan Government Blue Book No.89/2: Wesleyan Church Affairs. n.d.

Tongan Government Blue Book: Report of the Minister of Police in re attempted assassination. May 1887.

Tongan Government Blue Book: Supplement to the

Report of the Minister of Police in re the attempted assassination. 1 August 1889.

The Tongan Government Gazette:

Vol.II	no.1	1 September 1880
	no.6	10 November 1880
	no.10	5 October 1881
	no.12	25 October 1882
	no.14	22 November 1882
	no.15	6 December 1882
	no.35	2 December 1885
	no.62	23 November 1887
	no.79	22 February 1888

Tongan Government White Book in Re Wesleyan Secession.
n.d.

D) NEWSPAPERS, JOURNALS, PERIODICALS AND MAGAZINES

Adelaide Advertiser, 29 March 1889.

Auckland Evening Bell, March 1887 to January 1888.

Castlemaine Advertiser, 14 July 1860 - 3 January 1887.

Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record, 14 July 1860 - 3 January 1887.

Contemporary Review 1883, Vol.XLIII, 'Native Councils in Fiji 1875-1880'.

Fiji Times, 22 October 1870 to 2 December 1903.

Koe Taimi O Toga, vol.I, no.1, March 1882, vol.I, no. 2, April 1882.

Melbourne Daily Telegraph, 4 April 1889.

New Zealand Herald, 9 February 1887 to 11 December 1887.

Sydney Evening News, 18 April 1887, 21 October 1897.

The Times, 30 December 1903.

Tonga Times, vol.I, no.1, 22 January 1876.

Wesleyan Methodist Magazine. July 1863.

Wesleyan Missionary Notices, Relating to Missions under the Direction of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Conference. May 1851 to April 1871.

E) UNPUBLISHED THESES AND AUTHOR'S MSS

Abide [K.M. Bates] The Foundations of Modern Tonga, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of New Zealand. Auckland, 1933.

Davidson, J.W. Samoa Mo Samoa. MS. in the possession of the author.

Davidson, J.W. Survey of the Government of Western Samoa, Confidential Survey at the request of the New Zealand External Affairs Dept. n.d., typescript in the possession of the author.

Fitzgerald, N.R. New Zealand Public Opinion and the Attempted Assassination of the Rev. S.W. Baker and His Eventual Removal from Tonga - A Study of New Zealand Opinion 1887 to 1890, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Otago, 1962.

Gunson, W.N. Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas, 1797-1860, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, A.N.U., 1959.

Hammer, G.E. The Early Years of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission in Tonga, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Otago, 1951.

Horne, Jason Primacy of the Pacific under the Hawaiian Kingdom, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Hawaii, 1951.

Koch, Gerd Die frühen Europäischen Einflüsse auf die Kultur der Bewohner der Tonga-Inseln, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, George-August Universität, Göttingen, 1949.

Latukefu, Rev. Sione Church and State Relationships in Tonga 1827-1875, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, A.N.U. (in progress).

Maude, A.M. Population, Land and Livelihood in Tonga, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, A.N.U., 1965.

Poulsen, J. A Contribution to the Pre-History of Tonga, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, A.N.U. (in progress).

Scarr, Deryck Policy and Practice in the Western Pacific, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, A.N.U., 1965.

F) CONTEMPORARY PUBLISHED WORKS AND WORKS BASED ON CONTEMPORARY OBSERVATIONS

Baker, Lillian & Beatrice Shirley Baker Memoirs of the Reverend Dr. Shirley Waldemar Baker, D.M., Ll.d. Missionary and Prime Minister. London [1951].

Blamires, Rev. W.L. & Rev. John B. Smith The Early Story of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria. Melbourne, 1886.

Brenchley, Julius Jottings during the Cruise of H.M.S. Curacoa among the South Sea Islands in 1865. London, 1873.

Campbell, Lord George Log Letters from the Challenger. London, 1876.

Crosby, E.E. (ed.) The Persecutions in Tonga as narrated by onlookers and now taking place. London, 1886.

Earl, The, and the Doctor [The Earl of Pembroke and Dr J.H. Kingsley] South Sea Bubbles. Melbourne, 1872.

Erskine, Capt. Elphinstone Journal of a Cruise Among the Islands of the Western Pacific, including the Feegees and others inhabited by the Polynesians and Negro Races, in H.M.S. Havannah. London, 1853.

Farmer, Sarah S. Tonga and the Freindly Islands; with a Sketch of their Mission History. Written for Young People. London, 1855.

Foljambe, C.G.S. Three Years on the Australian Station. London, 1868.

Ford, Worthington Chauncey (ed.) Letters of Henry Adams 1858-1891. London, 1930.

Gordon-Cummings, C.F. A Lady's Cruise in a French Man-of-War. Edinburgh, 1882.

H.B.M. High Commission for the Western Pacific.
Copies of Correspondence between His Excellency,
Sir John Thurston, H.B.M. High Commissioner and
Consul-General for the Western Pacific, and the
Hon. S.W. Baker, Premier of the Government of Tonga
with reference to certain libels printed and
published by him in the Australian colonies and
elsewhere. Auckland, 15 March 1890.

Lawry, Rev. Walter Friendly and Feejee Islands,
A Missionary Visit to various Stations in the
South Seas in the Year MDCCCXLVIII. 2nd ed.,
 London, 1850.

London Medical Directory, 1847.

Mariner, William An Account of the Natives of the
Tonga Islands, with a Grammar and Vocabulary of their
language, compiled from the Communications of W.
Mariner by John Martin. 2 vols., London, 1817.

Maudslay, Alfred P. Life in the Pacific Fifty
Years Ago. London, 1934.

Maudslay, Alfred P. Private Correspondence between
Mr Maudslay and Sir A. Gordon. July 1878 -
 January 1879.

Meade, Herbert A Ride Through the Disturbed
Districts of New Zealand together with some
Account of the South Sea Islands. 2nd ed.,
 London, 1871.

Minutes of an Enquiry by deputation appointed by
the Board of Management of the Australian
Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in Sydney,
to enquire into the charges against Rev. S.W.
Baker held at Nuku'alofa, Tongatabu, 8th Oct.
1879.

Missionary Transactions, Volume I. 'Tongataboo in
the Friendly Islands, Journal of the missionaries
1797-1860' [London], n.d.

Moseley, H.M. Notes by a Naturalist on the
'Challenger'... London, 1879.

- Monfat, Le P.A. Les Tonga ou Archipel des Amis et le R.P. Joseph Chevron - Etude historique et religieuse. Lyon, 1893.
- Partington, James Edge Random Rot. A Journal of Three Years Wandering about the World. Altrincham, 1883.
- St. Johnston, Alfred Camping Among Cannibals. London, 1883.
- Stanmore, Lord (Sir A. Gordon) Fiji - Records of Private and Public Life 1875-1880. Edinburgh, 1904.
- Thomson, Basil The Diversions of a Prime Minister. Edinburgh and London, 1894.
- Thomson, Basil 'The Samoa Agreement in Plain English'. Blackwoods Magazine, vol.166, December 1889.
- Thomson, Basil Savage Island: An Account of a Sojourn in Niué and Tonga. London, 1902.
- Thomson, Basil 'A Statesman-Adventurer of the Pacific'. Blackwoods Magazine, vol.175, February 1904.
- Thomson, Sir Basil The Scene Changes. New York, 1937.
- Waterhouse, J.B. The Scession and Persecution in Tonga. Sydney, 1886.
- Trood, Thomas Island Reminiscences - A graphic detailed romance of a life spent in the South Sea Islands. Sydney, 1912.
- The Vagabond [Julian Thomas] Holy Tonga. Melbourne, n.d.
- [Vason, G.] An Authentic Narrative of Four Years residence at Tongataboo, one of the Friendly Islands in the South Seas. Ed. by S. Piggott, London, 1810.
- West, Rev. Thomas Ten Years in South Central Polynesia,

Being Reminiscences of a Personal Mission to the Friendly Islands and Their Dependencies. London, 1865.

Young, Rev. Robert The Southern World. Journal of a Deputation from the Wesleyan Conference to New Zealand and Polynesia. 4 ed., London, 1858.

G) MODERN PUBLISHED WORKS

Beaglehole, Earnest and Pearl Pangai, Village in Tonga. Polynesian Society Memoirs XVIII, Wellington, 1941.

Benson, C. Irving A Century of Victorian Methodism. Melbourne, 1935.

Blanc, Monseigneur J.F. A History of Tonga or Friendly Islands; Trans. from the Tongan by C.S. Ramsay. California, n.d.

Chappell, N.M. New Zealand Bankers' Hundred - A History of the Bank of New Zealand, 1861-1961. Wellington, 1961.

Colwell, James (ed.) A Century in the Pacific. Sydney [1914].

Fletcher, C. Brunson The Black Knight of the Pacific. Sydney, 1944.

Gifford, E.W. Tongan Society, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Bulletin No.61. Honolulu, 1929.

Koskinen, Aarne A. Missionary Influence as a Political Factor in the Pacific Islands. Helsinki, 1953.

Legge, J.D. Britain in Fiji, 1858-1880. London, 1958.

Malia, P.S. [Monseigneur J.F. Blanc] Chez Les Méridionaux du Pacifique. Lyon and Paris, 1910.

Martin, K.L.P. Missionaries and Annexation in the Pacific. O.U.P., 1924.

Masterman, S. The Origins of International Rivalry in Samoa 1845-1884. London, 1934.

Morrell, W.P. Britain in the Pacific Islands.
O.U.P., 1960.

Moulton, J. Egan & W. Fiddian Moulton of Tonga.
London, 1921.

Oliver, Douglas L. The Pacific Islands. Rev. Ed.,
New York, 1961.

Pacific Islands, vol.III British Naval Intelligence
Division, Geographical Handbook Series, B.R. 5195B
[1944].

Roberts, S.C. Tamai: The Life Story of John
Hartley Roberts of Tonga. Sydney, 1924.

Ryden, George Herbert The Foreign Policy of the
United States in Relation to Samoa. New Haven,
1933.

Scarr, Deryck 'John Bates Thurston, Commodore J.G.
Goodenough and Rampant Anglo-Saxons in Fiji',
Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand.
November, 1964. □

Scholefield, Guy H. The Pacific, It's Past and
Future. London, 1919.

Williamson, Robert N. The Social and Political
Systems of Central Polynesia. Vols.I and II.
O.U.P., 1924.

Wood, A.H. A History and Geography of Tonga.
Nuku'alofa, 1932.

Wright, Louis B. and Mabel Fry Puritans in the
South Seas. New York, 1936.